

NOBLE BLOOD



By CAPTAIN
CHARLES KING
U · S · A ·

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Very truly Yours
 Chauncey
 Brig. General a/c.
 Comdg 1st Brig. 1st Division.
 April 1899. 8th Corps, Manila.

NOBLE BLOOD

A PRUSSIAN CADET STORY

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF
ERNST VON WILDENBRÜCH

OF THE GERMAN ARMY

BY

Charles King, U. S. Army and Anne Williston Ward

AND

A West Point Parallel

AN AMERICAN CADET STORY

BY

CAPTAIN CHARLES KING, U. S. A.

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INTRODUCTION.

FEW stories of cadet or student life have impressed me as did "Das Edle Blut." Told so simply—so naturally—as to read like a stenographic report of the old colonel's own language, it is so strong a word-picture of German cadet life, so true to human nature and so touching in its pathetic close, that I could not resist the desire to place it before American readers of soldier tales. The permission of the author having been graciously given, the translation has therefore been made, and,

while all stories must lose in translation, it is hoped that among our youth its manly lesson may not be lost.

That I should venture to add to it a cadet story of our own is indeed hazardous, but I tell it because certain of its incidents were instantly recalled by the glowing pages of Ernst von Wildenbruch, the gifted author of "Das Edle Blut."

CHARLES KING,

Captain U. S. Army.

*Steamer Kaiser Wilhelm II.,
North German Lloyds,
Nearing Naples, December 18, 1895.*

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NOBLE BLOOD.

I WONDER if there really can be in this world people who are utterly devoid of curiosity; people who are capable of passing by a person whom they see gazing intently at some unknown object, without experiencing the least desire to pause, follow the direction of the other's eyes, and find out what so mysteriously attracts his attention.

I, for my part, should any one ask me whether I belonged to that strong-minded class of human beings could scarcely answer "Yes" with a

clear conscience ; for there was once, long since, an occasion on which I not only experienced that itch of curiosity, but ignominiously succumbed to it, and did as every other inquisitive person would have done under the circumstances.

The event to which I refer took place one summer afternoon in an inn of the old town in which I followed the profession of the law.

The room in which we sat was on a level with the great square outside, of which its windows commanded a full view.

At this hour of the day it was usually almost deserted, a state of things very agreeable to me, as I have always been a friend of solitude.

On this particular occasion, the room was only occupied by three persons : the portly cooper who had just poured me out a glass of golden-yellow muscatel from the dust-begrimed bottle he had in his hand ; secondly, myself sitting in an angle of the cosy many-cornered room, slowly sipping the aromatic wine ; and lastly, a man who had seated himself by one of the open windows with a goblet of red wine beside him, and was surrounding himself with fragrant clouds issuing from the long, smoke-stained meerschaum pipe between his lips.

This personage, whose red-tanned face with its large, gray beard, was familiar to the whole town, was an old colonel on the retired list. He

belonged to a small colony of men who like himself had ceased to play an active part in life, and had settled down in this peaceful little town, there awaiting in enforced idleness the end of their days.

Every day, at the same hour, they would saunter in groups of twos or threes toward the inn, into which they would all disappear between twelve and one o'clock. There, in the comfortable room above mentioned, they would gather round the table and some bottles of Moselle wine, soon to vanish from human sight in a thick cloud of cigar-smoke, from which issued the rusty, garrulous voices, commenting on the latest military news.

The old colonel was also an hereditary guest of the inn, but he never appeared at the general assembly hour, evidently preferring the quiet of the later afternoon.

His seemed to be a lonely, solitary nature; he was seldom seen in the company of others, and he lived in the outskirts of the town, beyond the river, where from his windows one could look out over the far-stretching meadows, which, in early spring, were sometimes completely flooded by the river. Often as I passed his house had I seen him standing alone by the window, his eyes, with their red, swollen lids, wandering thoughtfully over the vast gray water desert beyond the dam.

And now he was sitting there at the open casement, looking attentively out on the square, over which the wind was blowing light clouds of dust.

What could he be studying so intently ?

The portly cooper, who no doubt found the company of two such silent customers most uninteresting, had already noticed the old gentleman's abstraction, and was standing in the middle of the room, his hands behind his back, gazing steadfastly through the other window.

Something of importance, therefore, must surely be taking place outside there.

As softly as possible, so as not to disturb my companions, I rose

from my seat, and followed the direction of their eyes. My curiosity was disappointed; there was nothing going on that was really worthy of remark. The square was to all appearance deserted except by two schoolboys who were standing under the large gas-lamp in the center of the square, confronting each other with threatening gestures.

Could it be this which sufficed so thoroughly to engross the attention of the old gentleman?

However, such is human nature, that, notwithstanding my disappointment, I could not resume my seat until I had ascertained whether or not the ominous looks and gestures were to end in a fight. The

boys had evidently just been released from afternoon school, and their satchels were still tucked under their arms. They seemed to be of the same age, though one was a head taller than the other. The big boy, a long, lanky fellow with a disagreeable expression in his freckled face, was standing directly in the way of the other—who was short and fat, with plump, rosy cheeks—and appeared besides to be irritating him with taunting words.

But after this had lasted a short time, the matter suddenly came to a climax. Both with one accord dropped their school-bags, and the smaller boy, lowering his head with the evident intention of butting his antagonist in the stomach, made a valiant charge.

The colonel, who had eagerly followed the movements of the combatants, now exclaimed in a tone of annoyance: "Longshanks will have him in chancery in no time now!" He seemed to disapprove altogether of the tactics adopted by the smaller lad.

As the colonel did not look at either of us while speaking, it is doubtful to whom his words were addressed, but our attention was now again riveted by the flustered urchins, who had speedily verified the old gentleman's prediction.

The tall boy had skillfully evaded his enemy's charge, and in the next moment had gripped the latter's head and tucked it safely under his arm. Then possessing himself

of the small one's right fist, which was vigorously belaboring his back, he dragged his now helpless opponent round and round and round again the high lantern in malignant triumph.

"That little chap is no good," disgustedly murmured the colonel, continuing his monologue; "he lets himself be caught in the same way time after time." He was clearly out of patience with the vanquished pugilist, and just as evidently bore no good will to the long, lanky victor of the fray.

"You see, they do the same thing every day," he went on, now addressing himself to the cooper, to whom he apparently desired to explain his interest in the proceedings.

Then, turning his face once more toward the open window, he muttered: "I wonder whether the little one will come to the rescue to-day?"

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, when, from the public gardens bordering on the square, shot out a small, slender lad, who, from the likeness between them, was evidently the brother of the plump party in distress, though of much slighter build than the latter.

"There he is," contentedly exclaimed the colonel, taking a sip of wine and stroking his gray beard.

The new arrival, without a moment's hesitation, rushed up to the combatants, and lifting his satchel with both hands, delivered

with it such a blow on the victor's back, that the latter was projected like a bomb to the very windows of the inn.

"Bravo !" shouted the colonel.

The tall fellow, thus surprised, tried to defend himself by a vigorous kick, but the other was too quick for him, and jumping aside treated his antagonist to another blow, this time on the head, and so well administered that the victor's cap was knocked off to the ground.

All this time, however, he had kept a firm grip on his prisoner, and still held him in the same helpless position.

But now the plucky little champion, inspired with a new plan of action, tore open his bag, dragged

from it the pen-box, snatched up a penholder, and suddenly began to give the hand which held his brother's captive vicious digs with the steel nib.

The colonel grunted out enthusiastic expressions of approval, and his eyes twinkled with delight.

Longshanks, however, found this novel mode of attack altogether too severe to be borne without retaliation. Enraged by the pain, he let go of his less dangerous aggressor, and dashed at the brother with uplifted fists.

But number three seemed now to be transformed into some wild animal. With his head bare, and the damp curls clinging to his pale, delicate face, he jumped over the

bag and its scattered contents and flew at his opponent, raining down on the latter's chest and stomach such furious blows, that step by step he forced him to retreat.

Meanwhile, number two, the unlucky cause of the fight, had regained breath and strength and now rushed to his brother's assistance, belaboring the enemy's back and flanks with the much-abused satchel.

At last the big fellow shook himself free, and stepping back, picked up his cap from the ground. The fight seemed to be approaching its end.

Panting and exhausted stood the three; Longshanks vainly striving to hide his discomfiture by a venge-

ful grin, while the little champion, with fists still doubled, stood narrowly watching the other's every movement in case he should show any disposition to renew the tussle.

But Longshanks seemed to have had enough of it for the present. Derisively raising his eyebrows he stepped further and further away, till, arrived at a safe distance, he stood still and began energetically to vituperate his recent aggressors.

The two lads, after having gathered up the scattered contents of their satchels, brushed the dust from their caps, and set forth on their way home.

As they passed our windows, I had a good opportunity to study the appearance of the little cham-

pion, who was a wonderfully refined and high-bred looking child. Their giant enemy, regaining courage at the sight of their backs, now again came after them, following them with shrill cries and jeers. The small victor scornfully shrugged his shoulders. "Such a cowardly, long good-for-nothing," he said, and with that suddenly turning once more confronted his foe. Longshanks instantly checked both his tongue and his advance, which discreet action was greeted by the brothers with shouts of mocking laughter.

They were at present standing just under the window, and the colonel leaned out, patting his small favorite on the head.

"Well done, my boy," he said.

“You’re a plucky youngster; there, have a taste of this as a reward;” handing out to the child his goblet of wine. The boy at first looked up astonished, then, whispering something to his elder brother, gave him his bag to hold and took the proffered goblet in his two slender hands. After he had taken a swallow, he, in his turn, took charge of the school-bags, and without so much as asking permission, handed over the glass to his elder, that he might also have a share in the treat.

“The little rascal!” muttered the colonel, laughing silently. “I allow him a sip of my wine, and he unceremoniously extends the permission to his precious brother.”

The child, however, unconcernedly returned the glass, looking as though what he had done were quite a matter of course.

"Well, was it good?" asked the colonel.

"Yes, thanks; very good," answered the boy, and lifting his cap, he and his brother once more set forth on their homeward way.

The colonel looked after the retreating figures till they turned the corner and vanished from his sight, then returning to his favorite form of monologue he muttered: "It's often a strange thing with such boys."

"It seems to me very irregular that they should fight each other like that in the open street," re-

marked the cooper severely; "it is astonishing that the masters allow it; now those children evidently belong to respectable people."

"There is no harm in it at all," retorted the colonel; "boys must have some freedom; it is ridiculous to expect the teachers always to be at their heels; it is both right and healthy for boys to pommel each other occasionally."

He rose from his seat, laid down his pipe, and walked stiffly toward the peg on which he had hung his hat, continuing his train of thought in broken, half-audible sentences.

"It is in boys of that kind—the real nature is apparent—later—when they grow up they all seem alike—it is strange what interesting

studies—one can make on boys like those.”

The cooper having handed him his hat, the old gentleman again took up his glass, in which a few drops still remained.

“The little rascals have drunk it all up for me!” he exclaimed, and looked almost mournfully at the scanty dregs, setting the glass down again without emptying it.

The cooper suddenly appeared to wake up:

“Won’t the colonel have another glassful?”

The old man had opened the wine list and was absently soliloquizing: “Hm—some other kind perhaps—one can’t get it by the glass though—a bottle by myself—rather too much.”

His gaze wandered slowly over to me, and I read in his eyes the mute question as to whether we should empty a bottle together.

"If the colonel will allow me," I said, "I am most willing to share a bottle with him."

He assented, apparently not unwillingly, and pointed out a certain kind to the cooper, saying, with the tones and bearing of a commander-in-chief: "Fetch me a bottle of that."

"That is a brand well known to me," he said, sitting down again and throwing his hat on a chair; "it is Noble Blood."

I had chosen my seat so that I could command a good side view of his face.

His eyes were gazing out of the window deep into the sky, and the red light of the sunset was mirrored in their depths. It was the first time I had seen him in such close proximity. He was evidently lost in dreamy thought, and as he mechanically stroked his gray beard it seemed as though, from the long vista of years stretching behind him, rose in his mind the forms of those who had been young with him in the sweet, dim past, and who were now—but who could tell where?

The bottle which the cooper now set before us contained a delicious Bordeaux, oily and brown with age. I tasted it, and then remarked in the same words the colonel had used:

"I fully agree with you, colonel; it is indeed noble blood."

Slowly his gaze returned from the distance, and resting a moment on my face seemed to say: "What do you know?" He took a deep draught, and then looking at me over the edge of his glass said:

"It is strange how, as one grows older, one thinks so much more of the earlier years of one's life, than of those more recent."

I held my peace, feeling instinctively that I was not expected just then to speak or ask questions. When men are remembering and calling up the past, they unconsciously become poets for the time being, and poets should not be interrupted or questioned in their work.

A long pause followed.

“How many different kinds of people one learns to know,” he then continued, “when one comes to think of it—many that live on and on—’twould be much better if they had never lived at all—and others—have to leave us—so much too soon.” He drew his palm over the boards of the table, and added: “There lies a great deal under that.” It looked almost as though the table represented to him the surface of the earth, and as though he were referring to the many who lay under its mold.

“It was all brought so visibly before me,” his voice sounded muffled and dull, “when I saw that child. With such boys—nature

asserts herself and will out, so that one can see clearly deep into the very blood. The pity is—that the noble blood so easily comes to grief or is lost to us—much more frequently than the other kind. I once knew such a boy.”

There it was at last! The cooper had withdrawn to a corner at the back of the room, and I maintained the same expectant silence; the only sound in the spacious apartment was the heavy voice of the old colonel, with its frequent pauses, more like the fitful gusts of wind which precede a storm or any other great disturbance of nature.

His eyes again wandered searchingly over my face as though to discover whether or not I were

worthy of listening to his story. He asked nothing, I said nothing, but sat looking at him, and possibly he read in my face the silent wish: Tell me about it; but he did not begin at once. First he drew from his breast-pocket a large cigar-case of brown leather. took out a cigar and slowly lighted it.

“Suppose you know Berlin?” he began, throwing away the match and puffing the first cloud of smoke over the table; “have probably also often been on the tramways there?”

“Oh, yes, frequently.”

“Hm — well — you may have noticed in riding from the Alexanderplatz toward the Jarowitz bridge behind the new Friedrichstrasse, at your right hand side, on

the Friedrichstrasse, there stands a huge old building; that is the old Cadet school." I nodded assent. "The new one, out in Lichterfelde, I don't know anything about, but the old one, that I knew well; yes—hm—was once a cadet there myself—yes—that one I know well."

The repetition of his words gave me the idea that he was not only well acquainted with the building, but also with a great deal that had taken place within its walls.

"Coming from the Alexanderplatz," he continued, "you first pass a large court surrounded by trees. At the present day that court is overgrown with weeds, but it was not so in my time, for all the exercising and drilling was done there,

and the cadets also used it as a playground during the recreation hours. Then comes the principal building, which surrounds another court, known by the cadets as the Square Court, that was also used as a recreation ground. You cannot see into it from the outside."

I once more nodded assentingly.

"And then, there still comes a third and smaller court on which stands another building. Don't know what it's used for now, but in those days it was the hospital. You can also perceive the roof of the gymnasium from the street, for that and the yard belonging to it lay close to the hospital; but now all that is gone. From the infirmary there was a small door leading

into the gymnasium yard, but that was seldom used and always kept shut, except on certain occasions, and those occasions were always to us terribly sad ones, for behind that door was the mortuary room. When a cadet died, he was laid in there and the door was left open till all his companions had been marshaled past to take a last look at him, and till he was carried away—yes—hm.”

Another long pause.

“As I observed before,” proceeded the colonel after a while in a rather depreciatory tone, “I don’t know much about that new academy out in Lichterfelde, but I have heard that it has risen to great importance and boasts a great number

of cadets. There, in the new Friedrichstrasse, we were not very numerous, only four companies which were divided into two classes: the "Primaner" and the "Sekundaner;" there were also the "Selektaner," who afterward entered the army as officers, and who were nicknamed the "Bollen," because they had a certain authority over the rest which rendered them rather unpopular.

"Well, in the same class, Sekunda, and company, the fourth, to which I belonged, were two brothers. Their name has nothing to do with it—but—well their name was von L. With the principals the elder was known as L. I, and the other, who was a year and a half

younger, as L. II, but we cadets dubbed them Big L. and Little L. Now Little L.—yes—hm—hm.”

The colonel moved restlessly about on his chair; it seemed as though he had at last come to the principal subject of his recollections.

“Such a contrast as those two brothers presented to each other I have never again encountered,” he continued, blowing a thick cloud from his pipe. “Big L. was a thick-set fellow, with a large head and clumsy limbs, Little L. was like a willow-wand, so slender and supple. He had a small, refined head, covered with fair, wavy hair which curled all round his forehead, and a nose like a young eagle’s; altogether—he was a boy that——”

The old colonel breathed a sten-torian sigh.

“Now you must not think that such things were of no consequence with us cadets. On the contrary, hardly had the two brothers moved over from the preparatory school—I think they came from Wahlstatt—into the academy, than their fate was promptly settled. Big L. was completely left out in the cold, while Little L. became the universal favorite.

“When the cadets emerged into the open air during recess, each one would seek out his particular cronies and with them saunter up and down the courts till the drum once more called to work.

Big L. at such times bestowed

himself where best he might and paced discontentedly to and fro, but with Little L. it was very different; hardly had he appeared in the court before he would be seized by three or four of the elder ones and triumphantly borne off by them. And strange to relate, those who were so desirous of his company were very often Primaner. As a rule the Primaner would not think of requesting the companionship of a "Schnappsack" from Sekunda; it was entirely beneath their dignity. But it was quite another thing in the case of Little L.; an exception to the rule was made for him. Notwithstanding this, he was just as much liked by the Sekundaner as by the superior Primaner; that was

very apparent in the class where we of Sekunda studied together. During class hours, we sat in alphabetical order and the two Ls. sat side by side, pretty nearly in the center of the room.

“They stood about alike in their studies. The elder brother had a very good head for mathematics, while in the other branches he distinguished himself neither one way nor the other; but in mathematics he was a “Hecht,” as we used to express it, and the younger lad, who was not at all strong in mathematics, would copy from his elder’s work. In every other branch of study, however, Little L. was the brighter of the two, and in fact was one of the first in his class. One

great difference between these two boys was: that the elder kept his information to himself and never helped out his classmates by prompting them, while Little L. was continually prompting, and did not hesitate to do so at the top of his voice when the occasion required it—yes, yes, yes——”

An affectionate smile played over the old man's face.

“If one of his classmates in the front row were being questioned and seemed in perplexity, Little L. would send the answer hissing over all the benches, and when came the turn of some one at the back, Little L. muttered the answer half audibly to himself.

“There was an old professor with

whom we had Latin. At almost every lesson he would come to a stand in the midst of the room and exclaim: 'L. II, you are again prompting in the most barefaced manner. Look out for yourself, or I shall soon be compelled to make an example of you; I give you fair warning to-day for the last time.'

"But each time remained the last but one," reflected the colonel, laughing to himself, "and the example was never made. For even though Little L. was not a model boy, but rather decidedly the reverse, he was also a favorite with the officers and professors; indeed, how could it have been otherwise? He was always good-tempered and in high spirits, as though every day

had brought him some new gift, though that was far from being the case, for the boys' father was an impecunious major in some infantry regiment, and they received next to no pocket money. Yet Little L. was always spick and span in his appearance, fresh and clean outwardly as well as inwardly. Altogether——”

The old gentleman paused, as though searching for some word that would adequately express all the loving admiration he felt for the little comrade of former days.

“As though nature had one day been in a supremely good temper,” he continued, “and setting down the lad had proudly exclaimed: ‘There he is, behold my work!’”

“It was strange how attached the brothers were to each other, considering the wide difference in their characters. With the elder it was not so noticeable; he was morose and taciturn and seldom showed what was passing in his mind; but the younger’s thoughts and feelings were always plainly written on his honest face.

And because Little L. was conscious of the fact that he was in far greater favor with every one than was his brother, his loyal heart was much grieved for the latter’s sake. When the cadets were walking to and fro in the courts, he would often look anxiously round to assure himself that his brother was also provided with companions.

And not only did he in study-hour allow L. I. to copy from his own work and constantly prompt him, but he also kept continual watch to make sure that no one molested or vexed him in any way; and often, when he covertly glanced at his brother without the latter's noticing it, the fair young face would assume an expression of such deep gravity, that it almost seemed as though the sight filled him with some secret anxiety or care."

The colonel smoked with renewed
| vigor.

"Afterward, when all those events had taken place which were then still hidden in the uncertain future, it occurred to me that he probably knew much more about his

brother than we did, and suspected in him the existence of certain qualities of which we were then totally ignorant."

"All this affectionate concern was of course noticed by the cadets, and though it did not in the least conduce to alter their opinion of Big L., who remained as unpopular as ever, it still further increased the general liking for Little L., who now had added to his other appellations that of 'Brother Lover.'

"The two shared the same room, and Little L., as I before observed, was always neat and tidy, while L. I was mostly the reverse. So Little L. constituted himself servant to his brother, polished up the buttons of his uniform, and before

every call for inspection, arming himself with the clothes brush, scrubbed and brushed at Big L.'s clothes till he was satisfied with the result; and special pains did he take on the days when 'the spiteful lieutenant' was in charge of the inspection.

"This ceremony took place every morning; the cadets stood aligned in long rows in one of the courts, while the officer on duty went in and out between the ranks examining their uniforms to see if they were in perfect order.

"When it was the turn of the 'spiteful lieutenant' to fulfill this duty, the whole company was always thrown into a terrible state of anxiety, for he invariably found

something amiss. He made it a rule to fillip with his fingers every blessed coat, and if the least speck of dust appeared, woe betide us.

“Now, however carefully and perseveringly one might have brushed one’s clothes, a few atoms of dust always did seem to remain in them, and this proceeding of the lieutenant’s naturally coaxed them out; as soon as he perceived this he would say, in a voice like an old bleating goat’s: ‘Take down this name for Rapport on Sunday.’ That meant, of course, that the Sunday holiday must go to the dogs, and that was to us the greatest of hardships.”

The old colonel took an energetic pull and then carefully stroked his

mustache into his mouth to recover the precious drops that had been appropriated by it; he was evidently made quite furious by the recollection of the "spiteful lieutenant."

"When one comes to think of it," he continued, "it needs an awful amount of meanness to deprive a poor fellow of his Sunday outing, which he has been looking forward to through all the hard work of the week, just for a trifle of that kind. At all events, later on in my own regiment, no such nagging was permitted; they knew that I, for one, would not stand it. To rate the men soundly and throw them into arrest, even to use very strong language on certain occasions—that

does them no harm ; but to be continually nagging at the poor fellows for little trifles is, to my mind, a despicable trick.

“ Very true,” exclaimed the cooper from the background, thus informing us that he too had been following the colonel’s tale with attention.

The old gentleman gradually calmed down and resumed his story.

“ Everything ran on in the same monotonous groove for the space of a year, and then came round the much-dreaded season of examinations, the most important event of the year.

“ At this time the Primaner passed the ‘Fahnrich’s’ ‘exam,’

and the Selektaner who, as I mentioned before, were surnamed the 'Bollen' passed the 'Offiziersexamen;' when these two divisions had done with their 'exams' they were sent home, and therefore, for a certain length of time, the Sekundaner were in sole possession of the building, waiting till they should be transformed into the future Prima. This state of affairs lasted till the new members of Sekunda moved in, and till the arrival of the newly named 'Bollen;' after that, the old order of things again set in.

In the meanwhile, however, a certain confusion reigned in the academy, especially while the last Primaner were making their preparations for departure; for they

were examined and dismissed by installments, and for a while everything was turned pretty much upside down.

“In the same room occupied by the two brothers was a ‘Primaner’ who was considered by everybody a first-rate fellow. This young gentleman had resolved that as soon as he had overcome the trials of the examinations and received his freedom, he was going to turn out in style. To this end he had procured himself, instead of the ordinary sword-belt given by the academy, a new belt of fine polished leather which was much better-looking than the regulation belt. You see, he often received money from home, so he could afford to procure himself this satisfaction.

“He had exhibited his new sword-belt to everybody, for he was aggravatingly proud of it, and it had been duly admired.

“When the longed-for day at last arrived, and the Primaner was packing his belongings preparatory to going home, he went to fetch and don his new belt, but—it was gone!

“A grand excitement ensued, and a general hunt was set on foot for the missing treasure, but without result. The Primaner had not shut up his acquisition in his own cupboard, but left it in his bedroom, where the helmets of the occupants were hung up side by side under a curtain, and placed it by the side of his own helmet. Thence it had totally disappeared.

“The only possible conclusion was that some one must have taken it.

“But who?

“At first, general suspicion fell on the old servant who blacked our boots and made up the rooms—but he was an old non-commissioned officer of former days, who had never been found guilty of the least inaccuracy during all his long life. Could it possibly be one of the cadets? Why, no one would dream of entertaining such a thought for one moment. So the matter remained a mystery and an unpleasant one.”

“The Primaner growled and swore, for he would have to go off with the ugly regulation belt after all.

“The other occupants of the room were silent and uncomfortable; they had all with one accord thrown open their wardrobes and challenged the Primaner to make an investigation of their belongings, but the latter had indignantly replied: ‘Why, it’s utter nonsense! who would think of such a thing?’

“And now something took place which excited more remark than all that had gone before, for suddenly the Primaner was once more in possession of his lost belt.

“He had already left his room, bag in hand, and was descending the stairs, when he heard himself called from behind, and turning round, saw Little L. tearing after him with—the missing sword-belt in his hand.

“Those who happened to be present when this occurred afterward said that Little L. was pale as a ghost and trembling violently. He muttered something in the Primaner’s ear and they had exchanged a few whispered sentences; then the Primaner had gently patted Little L. on the head, taken off the regulation belt, replacing it by his own, and departed, first giving the rejected belt to Little L. to be put back in its place.

“Naturally the secret could no longer remain hidden, and, sure enough, it was soon public property.

“A new arrangement of the rooms had been ordered; Big L. had been exchanged into other quarters and was in the act of

moving when all this excitement arose.

“It afterward occurred to the cadets that he had been remarkably quiet while accomplishing his move; but of course that is always the way: when the grass has sprung up, everybody claims to have heard it grow. So much, however, was true: he would not let any one help him, and when Little L. had tendered his services, Big L. had repulsed his offer quite gruffly. Little L. notwithstanding, anxious as ever to be helpful, had not let himself be discouraged, and as he took out from the wardrobe his brother’s ticking gymnastic-jacket, which was carefully folded, he felt something hard inside of it—and there was the lost sword-belt!

“What the brothers said to each other in that moment, or whether they exchanged words at all, nobody ever knew, for Little L. had the presence of mind to slip noiselessly out of the room, and not till he was safely out of the door did he throw away the jacket and, unmindful of consequences, rush away in search of the ‘Primaner’ to restore to him his lost property.

“But now there was no help for it, and in five minutes the news had spread like wildfire through the entire company; L. I had yielded to temptation and had appropriated one of his roommates’ belongings. Half an hour later a message was carried from room to room: “This evening, after taps, every one

to meet for consultation in the company hall.'

"I should tell you that each company had in its ward a large room or hall where censures were given and other transactions of importance conducted. This place was called the company hall.

"Late in the evening, therefore, when the lights were out and everything lay in darkness, muffled forms softly emerged from the different rooms; no door was allowed to creak and every one was in stocking feet; for the superiors as yet knew nothing of the afternoon's occurrence, and if they were to surprise our midnight meeting, we would draw down a terrific storm upon our heads.

“When we arrived at the door of our company hall, we found Little L. standing beside it, leaning dejectedly against the wall, with his face the color of chalk. Two of the cadets took him by the hand and said: ‘Little L. can come in too; it was none of his fault.’ There was only one who objected to this proposition, and that was a big, tall fellow whose name was—though names have nothing to do with it, you know—well, his name was K. But his objection was immediately overruled; Little L. was allowed to enter the hall with the rest, two candles were then lighted and placed on the table, and the consultation began.”

The colonel's glass was almost

empty; I filled it for him, and after taking a long draught he continued:

“All this may appear laughable, even ridiculous, to outsiders now, but I can assure you that we felt very far from laughing at the time; on the contrary, the scene presented to us a very uncanny and lugubrious appearance.

“That one of our number, a cadet, should prove to be a thief, seemed to us something incredible and terribly disgraceful. Every one looked awed and only spoke in whispers. As a rule, denouncing a comrade to the officers was considered a most contemptible proceeding, but when an act like this one had been committed, the perpetrator was no more a cadet in our

eyes, and therefore we were now to decide whether or not the captain should be informed of what had taken place.

“K. was the first to speak. He declared that it was certainly our duty to tell everything to the captain, for L. I had, by his low action, forfeited all consideration on our part.

“K. was the largest and strongest fellow in the company. His words were therefore listened to with attention, and the cadets were all, in their hearts, of the same opinion, so, as nobody could think of any alternative, silence prevailed.

“At this moment the group round the table was broken through by Little L., who had till now been

standing in the background. His arms hung limp and nerveless by his side, and his eyes were bent on the floor; he evidently wanted to say something, but had not the courage to do so.

“K. again took the lead and said authoritatively: ‘L. II has nothing whatever to say in the matter.’

“But this time his opinion was little heeded. He had always been hostile to the two brothers, no one could tell why, especially toward the younger one. He was also far from being a favorite, for his companions instinctively felt that there was something mean and repulsive about him. He was one of those who only attack beings smaller and weaker than themselves, while

keeping on the good side of those who are stronger than they.

“Therefore an indignant whisper broke out from every direction: ‘Little L. shall certainly speak if he wishes to—he has more right to do so than any one else here.’

“When the lad heard how his comrades were taking his part, his self-command gave way and he broke down entirely.

“One of his friends went up to him and affectionately laying his hand on his shoulder said: ‘Try and calm yourself, and tell us what you want to say.’

“Little L. raised his white face and sobbed despairingly: ‘If you denounce him, he will be thrown out of the corps, and then what is to become of him?’

"We were all silent, knowing that the boy was right, and that such would inevitably be the consequence if we notified the captain of what had taken place. We also knew that L.'s father was very poor, and involuntarily we all wondered what the father would say if he came to hear of his son's conduct.

"'But you must see for yourself,' continued the cadet who had before addressed Little L., 'that your brother has been guilty of a disgraceful act and deserves to be punished for it.'

"Little L. nodded silently, he knew that it was only fair and just.

"The cadet stood wrapped in

thought for a few moments and then turned to the others: 'I will make a proposition,' he said; 'if you are all willing, we will not ruin L. I's whole prospect in life, but we will give him another chance and see if there is not some good in him. L. I shall choose for himself whether he would rather we should denounce him, or that we keep the matter to ourselves; give him a good thrashing and then let the whole thing be buried and forgotten.'

"That seemed to be a famous way out of the difficulty, and all agreed unanimously. The cadet turned to Little L. and said to him: 'Then go and find your brother and bring him here.'

"Little L. dashed the tears from

his eyes and nodded hastily. He ran out of the room and very soon reappeared with his brother.

“L. I did not dare to look any one in the face, but stood in our midst like a condemned criminal. Little L. placed himself behind his brother and kept his eyes anxiously fixed on him.

“The cadet who had made the proposal now began the examination, and turning to L. I asked :

“Did he acknowledge that he had stolen the sword-belt ?

He did acknowledge it.

“Did he realize that his deed had really rendered him henceforth unworthy of his cadetship ?

“He did realize it.

“Did he prefer that we should

denounce him to the captain, or that we should give him a thrashing and then let the whole affair be buried in oblivion?

“He preferred the latter alternative.

“A sigh of relief went round the hall, and it was decided to settle the matter there and then.

“Some one was despatched for one of the bamboo canes that we used for beating out our clothes.

“During his absence, we tried to persuade Little L. to leave the room, so as not to be present at the execution, but he silently shook his head, and signified that he preferred to stay.

“As soon as the messenger had returned, L. I was stretched out,

face downward on the table, while two held his hands and two his feet. The candles were taken from the table and held high in the air, and the whole scene now presented a truly awful appearance.

“K. was to be the executioner, as he was the strongest of the assembled company. He stood aside and, reaching out, let the stick whiz down on L. I with all his strength.

“The boy roared under the fearful blow and was on the point of giving a yell when Little L. rushed up to him, and burying his brother’s face on his shoulder, whispered:

“‘Don’t howl, don’t howl, or everything will be discovered.’

“Big L. gulped down his exclamation and moaned half audibly to himself.

“K. again lifted his arm and a second vigorous blow rang through the hall.

“This time, the victim tossed and struggled to such an extent that those at his hands and feet could scarcely hold him. Little L. had flung both arms round his brother’s neck and was almost stifling him in his anxiety. His face was white as chalk and his eyes almost starting from his head, while he trembled from head to foot; as we all gazed at him in silence, we felt that we could not endure the sight much longer.

“When, therefore, another energetic blow had been delivered with the same result as before, an excited whisper arose from all direc-

tions: 'That's enough now; stop it.'

"K., though crimson and breathless from his exertions, was of the opinion that it was not yet sufficient, and again raised his arm, but three or four of us threw ourselves upon him, snatched away the stick and pushed him aside.

"L. I was released and stood with bent head by the table, Little L. beside him.

"The execution was over.

"The cadet, who had by his proposition taken the lead of the proceedings, stepped forward and, raising his voice slightly, said: 'Now the whole matter is over and done with, let everybody shake hands with L. I, and whoever, from this

moment on, makes any reference to what has taken place to-day is a rascal.

“A unanimous ‘Yes, yes,’ showed that he expressed the general opinion.

“Every one stepped up to Big L. and shook hands with him, but after that, all with one accord rushed up to Little L. and he was soon surrounded by a throng of friends, all eager to press his hand. Those who could not get near enough stretched out their hands over the shoulders of those in front, others climbed on the table to get at him; they stroked his head, and patted him enthusiastically on back and shoulders, whispering the while words of affection and sympathy.”

The old colonel lifted his glass to his mouth—it seemed as though something were choking him, and he were trying to gulp it down. When he again lowered the glass he drew a long breath.

“Such boys,” he said, “have instinct—instinct and feeling.

“The lights were blown out, and all flitted noiselessly back to their respective rooms; five minutes later every one lay in bed and the affair was a thing of the past.

“The captain and the other officers had not heard a sound, and remained in total ignorance of what had occurred.

“All was over,” the colonel’s voice was heavy and slow; he had sunk both hands in his pockets and

was staring absently before him through the dense mist of cigar-smoke.

“So we all of us thought, as we lay down to rest that evening. Whether Little L. slept much during the night is doubtful; he looked little like it the next day.

“Until now it had always seemed as though some mischievous sprite occupied the place where he sat. Now that place seemed a blank, so pale and quiet had he become.

“As when you take up a butterfly in your hands, carelessly crushing out the vivid colors and beautiful brilliance from its wings, so was the change in him; I don't know how else to describe it.

“In the afternoons henceforth,

he was always with his brother. He probably realized that L. I would be less sought for than ever now; therefore he himself would keep him company. And so the brothers walked to and fro, arm in arm, from one court to the other, both with bent heads and apparently exchanging but few words with each other."

Again there ensued a pause in the story, and once more I filled the colonel's glass while he puffed away at his cigar.

"All this," he resumed, "might have worn itself out in time, and things have returned to their former condition, but for——"

He laid his clenched hand on the table.

"There are people," he said angrily, "who are like a poisonous weed in the ground, which destroys whatever comes in contact with it; people who likewise poison and pollute all the rest of mankind.

"One day we were having a class of natural philosophy. The professor was showing us different experiments with his electric battery, and wished, amongst other things, to have an electric shock communicated throughout the class. To this end we had all to join hands so as to establish the communication between us.

"When, therefore, L. I stretched out his hand to K., who sat beside him, the latter hastily pulled back his own with a great show of aver

sion, as though he had been about to touch a toad.

“L. I shrank back into himself without a word, and a burning flush spread over his face.

“But in the same moment Little L. rose from his place, came round and seated himself between his brother and K., gripped the latter’s hand and banged it down on the bench with such force that the fellow gave a loud exclamation of pain.

“Then he seized Little L. by the throat and a regular fight began between the two in the middle of the lesson.

“The professor, who had been busying himself with his machine, now approached hastily, with flying coat-tails.

“ ‘Tut, tut, tut,’ he cried.

“ He was an elderly man and one of whom we stood little in awe.

“ The two had tackled each other so energetically that they did not even stop when the professor was in front of them.

“ ‘What disgraceful conduct!’ exclaimed the professor, ‘what impropriety! Will you please to stop fighting immediately.’

“ K. looked up and said: ‘L. II began it, though I did nothing whatever to him.’

“ Little L. stood upright—for we had to stand when the masters addressed us—with the perspiration running down his temples, and his teeth clenched so fiercely that one could see the muscles working

through his thin cheeks. As he heard K.'s assertion, a smile spread over his face. I never saw anything like it.

“The old professor continued for five minutes to deliver high-sounding and finely modeled sentences in condemnation of such preposterous conduct, discoursed at length on the dangerous abyss of ingrained brutality, of which such outrageous behavior was a sure proof. We let him talk on; our thoughts were with the two bitter enemies.

“And hardly was the lesson over and the professor out of the door, when a book was sent spinning over the class, well aimed at K.'s head. As he turned round furiously to discover the assailant, another

volume came whizzing at him from the opposite direction, and now a general cry broke out: 'Down with him, down with him!' The whole class sprang to their feet, dashing over benches and tables toward their prey; and, I can assure you, that fellow received such a drubbing as he did not get over in a long time."

The old colonel smiled to himself with grim satisfaction, and looked at his hand which still lay tightly clenched on the table.

"I can tell you that I helped too, and with right good will; of that I can flatter myself."

It seemed as though his hand had forgotten the fifty years that had gone by since then; one could see

by the firmly clenched fingers that they were once more, in spirit, thumping cheerfully on the prostrate K.

“Now, as is always the case with creatures of like stamp, this K. had a vengeful and malignant as well as a treacherous nature, and it would have given him immense satisfaction to go and straightway divulge the whole story to the captain; his fear of us, however, prevented him from venturing on that proceeding.

“But he never forgot for one instant the treatment to which we had subjected him, and that on behalf of Little L.

“One afternoon, the cadets were as usual enjoying the fresh air in the court during recess, the two

brothers together, and K. arm-in-arm with a couple of his cronies.

“To go from the square court to the other one, we had to pass under an archway which was cut through one wing of the main building, and there was a rule that the cadets should not pass through this passage arm-in-arm, so as not to block the narrow space.

“On this particular afternoon, fate ordained that K., as he was passing under the archway with his companions, should meet there the two brothers, who, lost in thought, had forgotten to leave go of each other at the entrance.

“K., perceiving this, though the matter did not concern him in the least, stops abruptly in front of the

two, opens his eyes wide in feigned astonishment, and remarks loudly :

“ ‘ What business have you to be walking through here arm-in-arm ? Do you wish to block the way for decent folks, you thieving beggars ? ’ ”

The colonel interrupted himself for a moment and observed :

“ It is now fifty years and more since that happened, but I remember it all as clearly as though it had been yesterday.

“ I was at that moment walking round the square court with two friends, when suddenly, from the direction of the archway, came a scream—I don’t know how to describe to you what it sounded like—but I think that if a tiger or some other savage brute broke loose from

its cage, and pounced on a human being, then one would probably hear something like what we heard that afternoon.

“It was so horrible that we three dropped each other’s arms and stood completely petrified. And not only we, but all who were in the court, stood stock still, and everything became for a moment still as death. Then there was a simultaneous and precipitate rush toward the passage; from the second court also they were approaching in hot haste, so that both entrances to the archway were soon crammed, I naturally among the crowd, and what was the sight that met my eyes !

“Little L. had thrown himself on K. and was clinging to him like a

wild-cat. With his left hand he was hanging on to the latter's collar, so that the great hulking fellow was almost strangled, and with the right he was pounding, crash, crash and crash into K.'s face, so that the blood was already running down in streams.

"At this moment the officer on duty appeared from the second court and forced his way through the crowd.

"'L. II, leave go directly,' he thundered out. He was a hugely tall man, with a voice which reached from one end of the academy to the other, and we stood in proper awe of him.

"Little L., however, neither saw nor heard, but pounded away at his

enemy's face, and with every blow came the fearful blood-curdling yell which seemed to pierce through us like a knife.

“When the officer saw that words were of no avail, he grabbed hold of Little L., and putting forth all his strength, tore him away from his victim.

“But as soon as Little L. was on his feet, his eyes turned upward and he fell to the ground writhing in fearful convulsions.

“We had never before seen anything of the kind, and looked on in silent astonishment and horror.

“The officer, however, who had bent down to examine him, now raised himself quickly and said: ‘The boy is in a terrible fit. For-

ward, two of you take him by the feet,' himself grasping Little L. under the arms, 'and over to the hospital.'

"And so they carried Little L. into the hospital.

"As they bore him away, we got hold of L. I, and from him, and from the two who had been with K., we heard how this dreadful scene had been caused.

"K. stood there like a whipped dog, wiping the blood from his face. If it had not been for that nothing would have saved him from another such drubbing as he had received shortly before from his class. But as it was we all turned silently away from him and never spoke to him again; from that moment he was to

us as a scoundrel and one unfit to deal with."

The table resounded as the colonel brought his hand down on it with a heavy blow.

"How long the cadets kept him under this ban, I don't know. But I passed another year in the same class without ever saying one word to him; we entered the army as 'Fahnriche' together; I never gave him my hand to bid him good-by, and I don't know whether or no he became an officer. I never looked for his name in the casualty list; don't know whether he still lives or whether he fell in one of the wars—to me he was and is no more in existence—the only thing that grieves me is that he ever came

into my life and that I cannot root him out from my memory as one pulls up a pernicious weed and throws it into the fire.

“The next morning brought bad tidings from the hospital; Little L. lay unconscious, in a heavy nervous fever. In the afternoon L. I was sent for, but his little brother no longer recognized him.

“And toward evening, as we all sat in the big mess-hall at supper, came the rumor—like a large black bird with silent wings it floated through the room—Little L. was dead.

“As we came out from supper, we found our captain standing at the door of the company hall; we were ordered to enter, and there the cap-

tain announced to us that our little comrade, L. II, had fallen asleep never to wake again.

“Our captain was a good and tender-hearted man, he loved his cadets dearly, and as he told us the sad news, he furtively wiped away the tears which had fallen on his beard.

“Then he told us all to fold our hands, and one of us had to step forward and repeat aloud the Lord’s Prayer.”

The old colonel bent his head.

“Then, for the first time, I realized how beautiful is the Lord’s Prayer.

“On the next afternoon the door which led from the hospital to the gymnasium-yard was opened—that cruel, fateful door.

“We were all assembled in the hospital-yard to take one last look at our dead comrade.

“No word was spoken, and nothing was heard but the shuffling footsteps as we marched by, and the heavy breathing which escaped from every breast.

“And there lay Little L., our poor Little L.

“All in pure white he lay there, with his hands folded on his breast, the fair hair curling round his wax-like forehead ; his cheeks were so fallen in that the delicate, high-bred nose seemed to stand far out, and on his face—an expression——”

The colonel paused a moment ; his breath came hard and painfully.

"I am an old man now," he continued in a broken voice. "I have seen the dead and dying on the field of battle, men whose faces expressed the sorest need or despair, but such bitter anguish and heart's sorrow as was written on the face of that child I have never again seen—never—never."

Deep silence reigned in the room. As the old colonel's voice died away, the cooper softly rose to his feet and turned on the gas over our heads; it had grown quite dark.

I once more took up the bottle, but it was almost empty; only one tear flowed slowly out, one last drop of Noble Blood.

A WEST POINT PARALLEL

AN

AMERICAN CADET STORY

BY

CAPTAIN CHARLES KING

U. S. ARMY

A WEST POINT PARALLEL.

THERE was a time when West Point discipline was far from being what it is to-day. There were days when even that personage so constantly in evidence now, the officer in charge, was only seen at parade, and not always there, for it sometimes happened that, having given the command "guides posts," the cadet adjutant looked in vain for the blue-coated, red-sashed official whose turn it was to receive the parade, and seeing none, had quietly directed the senior cadet captain to

fall out and take command, and quitting his position on the right of his company, that young magnate returned sword, strode forth to the designated spot, and there received the salute of the long, statuesque gray and white line. There were weeks and months when cadets of the upper classes were excused from all military duty except Sunday morning inspection, and detailed as instructors in mathematics, French or English. There were months when many of the officers on the academic staff limped painfully, used canes or crutches or both, and when cadets of the upper classes did fully half of the section work in the academic building. There even came a time when parade and

drills were suspended and full a third of the corps was excused from marching to meals because so many were in rags as to clothing and shoes, and all this was during the great civil war of the early 60's, perhaps the most exciting, if not indeed the most demoralizing period the Military Academy ever knew.

But there were compensations.

To begin with, the position of cadet officer carried with it responsibilities and rewards far exceeding those of the present time. Every uncrippled graduate worth his salt was at the front or longing to be there. Only the disabled, as a rule, were sent to the academy as instructors. Even the heroic captain at the head for the time of the de-

partment of cavalry tactics and horsemanship, rode riddled with wounds received in the mad charge of his regiment at Gaines's Mill. A few officers there were who seemed in full possession of their physical powers, but with that lively lot of youngsters to manage, their instructors, especially in the department of tactics, could not be all invalids; so, much to their disgust no doubt, perhaps half a dozen young officers were kept on duty at the Point, and an unhappy lot was theirs.

In one way the corps of cadets was in clover. Discipline and surveillance were necessarily relaxed. Inspections of quarters by night and day were infrequent, and, on the part of one or two of the tactical

officers, indeed, they became almost perfunctory. Then as war prices soared higher and higher and the pay remained at thirty dollars a month, the corps was plunged in debt. Orders for new uniforms and shoes had to be refused, and by the time the war was well along in its third year and the winter of '63-4 came on, three-fourths of our number were a lot of scarecrows. Congress had to come to our relief, increase the pay, and date it back, so as to set the battalion on its feet again, but meantime there was a period of that demoralization which invariably runs with rags, and some queer sights were seen and deeds were done that could hardly seem possible now. The war days were

famous at the Point, long years after the war had closed, for traditions of the tower kitchen, the billiard-room under "C" Company barracks, the Christmas ghost parade, the midnight reveille, and the wheelbarrow battery drill, were handed down from class to class as among the rollicking reminiscences—the farce comedies of the corps.

But there were tragedies too.

And there was a bright, brave time, never to be forgotten of those who then wore the academic gray, when, such was the shortage of instructing officers from the army, that the discipline, the control, the whole management of the battalion seemed vested in the cadet officers; when the first captain and adjutant

weremagnates entrusted with duties and responsibilities that nowadays fall on shoulders ten years worn with shoulder straps.

“The War Department cannot spare more officers,” said our chivalric commandant, himself sorely wounded and scarred; “I must rely on you young gentlemen to maintain the discipline of the battalion.”

And so, relying on their honor, certificates that had long been in vogue to the effect that this inspector of sub-division had performed his duty in accordance with academic regulations and reported all violations thereof, or that such a corporal of the guard had done likewise—these and all but the certificate attached to the report of

the cadet officer of the day had been abolished. The results in point of drill, precision and steadiness in ranks, and in regularity and order in barracks, were not all they should have been, and not to be compared with what obtains to-day; but two things were developed to a pitch that has never since been excelled,—the individual capacity of cadet officers who possessed any capacity at all, and the standard of personal honor maintained in and by the corps of cadets. The man caught saying or doing a mean thing was summarily cut, and he who deviated from the truth to get rid of a report or demerit was as summarily “bounced” by his own fellows. Too often of late years has the en-

tire battalion been at odds with the officers appointed over them—the tactical officers—but, in the times whereof I tell, despite the fact that there was one officer whose judgment was often at fault and who had aroused undergraduate antagonism, the cadet officers as a rule worked shoulder to shoulder with the commandant and had the substantial backing of every right minded fellow in the corps.

But we had thoughtless youngsters, reckless, good-hearted, but foolish boys, and even our allotted proportion of black sheep. Even among names long known and honored in the army there sometimes cropped out a youngster incapable of appreciating the responsibilities

attaching to those who bore it, and of these was a laughing, happy-go-lucky, handsome, popular, dare-devil of a fellow whom I shall call Boone for the reason that there wasn't a man of that name in the corps.

Hailing from the proudest of our border States, a commonwealth that never turned out a coward, grandson of a famous statesman and bearer of a famous name, he came to the Point in the heat of the war days, escaping the discipline, drill and drudgery of the most beneficial part of West Point education, plebe camp, by being shoved in with several promising young fellows selected in several cases from the volunteers who had already won

distinction at the front, "Buck" Boone, as he was called, Shelby Buckner Boone, as he was borne on the academic roll, was received into the close fellowship maintained, in defiance of all cadet traditions, by the appointees from just one State. In that day to be a Kentuckian was better than four kings, paraphrased an envious Tennessean who longed to live in the seventh division but couldn't, for the simple reason that that particular hallway of cadet barracks had temporarily been christened "Kentucky," and it was run, ruled, and governed by the sons of "the Dark and Bloody Ground," as genial, jovial, gallant and high-spirited a lot of young soldiers, despite the gruesome name

attaching to their native soil, as ever smoked smuggled tobacco. Cadets from the other States were sprinkled throughout the entire battalion, distributed impartially throughout the four companies, but, through some odd oversight of the authorities, or possibly with their knowledge and consent, almost every Kentuckian in the corps, except the tall first captain, had managed to get into Company "D," and to find his room and roommate in that blessed seventh division. The commandant of cadets in 1862, himself a Kentuckian, was a gifted and gallant cavalryman who had been captured and paroled in Texas at the outbreak of the war, who was pining to get to the front at the

head of a regiment, and only served at the Point until he could secure his exchange ; and, boylike, the less favored fellows from other States would have it that there was a Free Masonry among Kentuckians that extended beyond the limits of the battalion and away up to the office of the commandant. But that was absurd. The colonel served only a few months in the capacity of commandant, but during those few months he brought about many changes. He vastly improved the cut and style of the cadet uniform, which had become dreadfully old-fashioned with its tight sleeves, wide cuffs, and high stock and collar. He abolished the sizing of the battalion—a mistake, by the

way, for it looked far more symmetrical in the old unbroken line, with the shortest in the center and the tallest on the flanks. He permitted men to exchange from company to company, thereby rendering it easy for all Kentuckians to consolidate in the extreme left wing. He thought the cadet adjutant, as his representative, should outrank all cadet officers, and therefore abolished the four captaincies, and this last-named innovation it was that made Kentucky even more Kentucky, for during the dark, gloomy winter of '62-3 one of our tragedies occurred, and one of the results was a change in the cadet adjutancy, the lieutenant commanding Company "D" being promoted to that

office, and as a result one of the most popular, honored and beloved men in the whole battalion, a Kentuckian, as luck would have it, became cadet commandant of that thrice lucky company. From that time on the seventh division of barracks became a sort of mundane heaven, a cadets' seventh heaven in fact.

Every evening, on the return of the battalion from supper, the Kentucky colony would gather to a man in the room of their new captain, and spend the half hour of recreation in smoking his tobacco and paying homage to the chief of their clan. Well did he deserve it, for a more thorough gentleman, a more courteous, sensitive, genuine,

highly bred, highly cultivated fellow never lived. Son of one of the noblest houses of a State renowned for noble deeds and names, his sire had met his soldier fate leading the headlong charge of his regiment at Buena Vista, and no one of our number doubted for an instant that the son would ask no death more glorious. Indeed, though he passed unscathed through the fields that followed, was it not a younger brother who died as the father had died, leading on his daring blue-jackets and falling first man at the top when they swarmed over the Corean forts!

No class distinction, no humiliating attitude of older cadet to humble plebe was ever seen within his

gates. To each man entering (and mind you, no matter how he looked it, "boy" was a term applied to none of our gray-clad number) was accorded the same smiling, cordial greeting. Even when, as sometimes happened, an alien entered an outsider to whom the soft shibboleth of the blue grass was impossible the same kindly hospitality was extended. He was a Kentucky gentleman, and all should eat his salt, sample his best "sun-dried," and, had we not all been on pledge—our class, to save a fellow who after all couldn't save himself—no doubt, as was the fashion of the time, the famous juice of Bourbon would have been as hospitably tendered. We did not marvel at the worship

with which his "statesmen" regarded him. The only enemies he ever knew were the hapless few whose envy turned their soured souls to hate. A "scene utterly unprovided for by the regulations," indeed, was which that ensued one dark winter morning when the companies closed on the center to march to breakfast, and, as one man, the Kentuckians dashed from the ranks, *an secours*, at sight of their hero suddenly taken at disadvantage and attacked by a man notoriously a powerful pugilist. There would have been tragedy indeed that day but for the prompt, cool-headed work of the adjutant and a brace of seniors, while the rest of us were marched away to a repast for which we had lost all appetite.

As a general rule that Kentucky colony in Company "D" absorbed more demerit than four times its force in the other three, and the weekly punishment rolls were ornamented by names hitherto and elsewhere only heard in connection with lofty statesmanship, eminent service on the bench, at the bar, or in the field of arms. Under ordinary circumstances, in those days Company "D" could manage to slouch through the manual at parade, or shamble through the evolutions at drill in a way to set the teeth of the officer in charge on edge. But from the time their champion and statesman stepped up to the command of it, there was something marvelous in the way it

could "brace up" and take the shine out of the others whenever any especial function was on. His lieutenants were men who fell rapidly into his ways. His grenadier first sergeant, one of the giants of the battalion (To what rank at the academy has that stalwart soldier and gentleman not attained!), was his stanch admirer and backer and, with one exception, the only disciplinarian in the company; that one exception bore something even closer than a Kentucky kinship to the handsome, laughing, reckless plebe of whom I have spoken. They were first cousins, blood relations, alike in form and feature, except that Shelby was much the taller—alike also in age and name, yet ut-

terly unlike in temperament. Marshall Boone had been more than two years at the Point when his cousin entered. He stood well in his class, wore the chevrons of a cadet sergeant, and had won the respect of the entire corps, yet it could not be said that he was popular. He was the quiet man of the Kentucky crowd. He would sit in silence listening to the fun and chaff and anecdote going on around him, a smile of amusement occasionally flitting across his thoughtful face, but speedily it would resume its mask of calm, almost melancholy indifference, and, unless directly appealed to, Marshall Boone had nothing whatever to say. Some of his "statesmen" held him some

what in ill favor. "He's too damned military" was their explanation, and by that was meant that in his capacity as cadet sergeant and file closer he exercised his authority and held every man in front of him strictly to his duty, and if anything went amiss, were it the fault of friend or foe, Kentuckian or Vermonter, the culprit's name went on the delinquency book forthwith, and, to the scandal of the Kentucky set, more than one of their number had been reported by another of their number for talking in ranks, inattention at parade, or some kindred military misdemeanor. Harrod, of the class of '65, was bristling with wrath one evening when he heard himself read out as losing step and

dress marching out to parade. He wanted to fight Boone forthwith, and actually got so far as to ask Ridgeley to be his second and take his message, and then down came the captain: "Look hyuh, Ridgeley, what's this I hear about Harrod's challenging Boone? I won't have it. This colony's got too much to do fighting the rest of the corps to admit of any squabbles among ourselves. Boone did right, suh, and if your man has said an obnoxious word to him on the subject he must apologize, and be quick about it."

But Harrod had fortunately said nothing to the cadet sergeant. He had taken it out in a general outbreak of profanity.

Shelby Boone was only a plebe when this happened, but a Kentucky plebe in a Kentucky colony had all the social rights of his statesmen, and Shelby considered it his right and privilege to go to his kinsman and upbraid him. "You're making yourself unpopular with the whole company, Marshall," he said, "and I think it my duty as a near relative to tell you so, and to ask you to think twice before you skin a Kentuckian again."

Marshall was smoking an old briar-root pipe at the time, a pipe whose cane-root stem bore testimony to having long been in service in the corps. He knocked the ashes out on the edge of the iron table and looked up at his flustered kins-

man with a quiet smile. "You see nothing improper in my reporting other members of the company when they make some egregious blunder, do you, Shelby?"

"No, that's different."

"No, it isn't different, and I'm surprised to hear that there's a Kentuckian in the corps who would claim exemption from demerit because he was a Kentuckian."

"Well, he wouldn't," burst in Shelby, "from the adjutant or first sergeant, or somebody not from the State, but what sticks in our crop is this idea of Kentucky spotting Kentucky. Why, Marshall, you'll be skinning me next."

Marshall looked grave. "Your post is so far on the right and mine

so far on the left I have few opportunities, but"—gravely now—"Shelby, if I saw you mixing things up in ranks, or being slouchy or inattentive on drill, I could not overlook it. You wouldn't ask for clemency that I couldn't grant your classmates?"

The junior Kentuckian stood there a moment, his face working oddly, his eyes averted. Finally he spoke. "I'll bet you the chief wouldn't countenance anything of the kind, and that he'd scratch off any skin you gave a statesman."

"You're mistaken there, Shelby," said the senior, mildly. "The chief may not skin a Kentuckian himself, because he rarely if ever reports anybody except when he is officer-

of-the-day and has to, but he would hardly go so far as to say to his sergeants that they must not do their bounden duty."

And now it must be explained for the benefit of those unacquainted with the system of discipline at the Point, that a rigid system of responsibility has existed there for years. It is to-day what it was in the days of the grandfathers of the boys now wearing the gray. For every error, big or little, in ranks or out, there exists a standard of demerit, and for the graver errors some slight punishment, such as a day's confinement to quarters, or walking post equipped as a sentry, accompanies the demerit. The cadet officer-of-the-day signs on

honor a certificate that he has reported every violation of academic regulations that has come under his notice, and in the event of carelessness or the faintest disorder in some of the sections marching to or from recitations in the academic building he would report not only the cadet or cadets at fault, but the section marcher himself, because he did not at once put a stop to the mischief. So, too, in the companies, each first sergeant has his delinquency book, locally known as the "skin book," and in this the officer or non-commissioned officer records the military misdoings of the members of that company, from a simple late at a roll call or appearing in ranks with a coat unbuttoned (if it be

only a single button), up to such serious, not to say heinous crimes as “replying in insubordinate and disrespectful manner when spoken to by file closer marching in from parade.” The captain is held rigidly to account for the bearing and condition of his company, and therefore in turn he has to be exacting with his subordinates. Sometimes these latter are lax and indifferent, seeking popularity among their fellow cadets; sometimes they are strict and reliable, winning the respect therefor of their fellows, if not their love, and of this latter class was Marshall Boone. He had never shirked a duty in his life.

The very evening of this cousinly conversation the clan was gathered

as usual in the chieftain's room. There he sat, with his long-stemmed pipe in his mouth, his handsome, swarthy face wreathed in smiles and tobacco smoke. Each man as he entered received the same cordial greeting: "Hello, Goodloe, old boy! Come right in and sit down. Hello, Warren! that you? How are you, and what do you hear from home?" The chief was interested in everyone and hospitable to what the corps thought an inexcusable extent. Everywhere else throughout the barracks the plebes were kept at an immense distance. An awful chasm yawned between the fourth classman and his next neighbor the third. For one whole year he must be taught meekness and his im-

measurable inferiority—taught that he could not consider himself one of the corps proper until the year of probation was completed. To this end it was the fashion to keep him at more than arm's length, and to address him on all occasions (after camp) with cold formality. In civil life we show respect by prefixing the "Mr." to the surname. In West Point circles, and in the army generally, it is the dropping of the "Mr." that indicates a man is taken into good fellowship. Therefore is it that for one awful year the fourth classman must be content to hear himself hailed by all his seniors as "Mr." So-and-so. Not until the probationary twelvemonth is over and done with can he hope to be-

come Brown, Jones or Robinson, Tom, Dick or Harry.

But even this unwritten law held not in the Kentucky colony. There sat the chief, tilted back in his chair, and to every Kentuckian who entered, were it first classman or fourth, the same salutation was accorded: "How are you, Breckenridge! How are you, Preston? How are you, Underwood? Come in, fellows; come in and fill up." The chief was a law unto himself and had the solid backing of his statesmen.

And what Shelby said was true, that while the cadet commanders of the other companies, in the interest of discipline, were compelled day after day to resort to the skin

book, the captain of "D" rarely, if ever, entered a report. His inspection of his command previous to marching out to parade was one of the most absurdly perfunctory things ever seen. It was questioned whether he really ever saw whether a man's shoes were blacked, his brasses polished, his belts properly adjusted. It was the company that seemed to take these matters up for him. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Jimmy," said Breckenridge, one evening, the moment the command "rest" had been given, as he turned to his left-hand neighbor. "You're simply running it on the chief. Here you are with your waist-belts twisted again, and you look like a rag shop broke loose.

Tell you what it is, old man, if I were the chief I'd skin you." Whereat Jimmy, blown and disheveled (for he had run between the first and second drums all the way from Battery Knox, where he'd been spooning with a pretty girl and had just got in ranks in time), blushed redder yet and looked half vexed, half penitent.

Meantime silent Sergeant Boone was helping straighten out his kit, and though saying nothing, heartily endorsing Breck.'s views. There was no time for further upbraidings, however, for adjutant's call struck up at the moment, the color company swept out on the plain, and the chief's voice was heard calling all "D" to attention.

It was a raw, cold evening, as I remember, and even over in Puritanical "A" Company, on the right flank, my roommate and I, plebes in the rear rank, felt shivery and cold, and we blessed the officer in charge when he acknowledged the salute of the line and bade the adjutant receive the reports instead of the customary "take your post, sir," and the grind of the manual of arms. The adjutant rushed through his orders two hundred words to the minute—he could talk about as fast as he could think—the line of plumed officers marched to the front, saluted the officer in charge and scattered, the band struck up "Pop Goes the Weasel," and away we went dancing homeward in double

time. It was not the custom then as now to advance in echelon of companies from the right and then make a simultaneous move to the left flank. On the contrary "D" started first and the others followed any way. Four tiptop first sergeants we had that year, and all are alive and eminent in their several corps or professions to-day. Ordinarily we trotted back to barracks with some attempt at style, but this evening not a soul was looking on, the officer in charge was streaking it for the angle of barracks and a comforting drink, the plumed cadet officers were blowing their fingers or threshing their arms as they scurried in along the pathway, and the "Deacon," as the first sergeant

of "D" was called, sung out to his leading guide to step out, and the long legs of the left flank company began getting over ground as though they were cased in seven-league boots. Our "by the left flank, march" came even sooner than theirs, and there resulted a little confusion in doubling up between "B" and "C" Companies when they reached the slanting path, but "D" had clear going, and there was absolutely nothing to justify what took place. The second set of fours from the left ran up on the heels of the leading set, tripping two men, who, though saving themselves from falling, nevertheless pitched forward so far as to drop their rifles and had to fall out

and get them. The "Deacon" was wroth, and well he might be. "Report those files," he sang out, and we away back in "A" Company heard his voice come echoing from the beautiful façade of the barracks, and the next minute "D" Company was doubling through the resounding sallyport while D—— and L——, having picked up their rifles, scuttled after their company, more or less perturbed in spirit. Now of the four that overran the set ahead of them, three were of the elect—three were Kentuckians, and of the three, one was Shelby Boone, already "loaded to the guards" with demerit.

"Delinquencies will be published at the mess hall. Dismiss your

companies," called out the adjutant, as he hurried through the sallyport in the wake of Company "A;" but we barely listened to them that night for thinking of the list that would appear with the morrow and the array that would be reeled off as the result of this evening's ice parade. "I wouldn't like to be in Boone M.'s place," a second class-man was heard to say. "He was nearest file closer to that gang in "D" Company coming in from parade to night, and at least a dozen of them deserve skinning."

"If that's the case," said the cadet lieutenant at the head of the table, "you can bet your bottom dollar Boone won't shirk his duty, and every man will catch it."

"Oh, no question about that," was the answer. "But he's not too popular in Kentucky now, and they won't forgive a wholesale 'skin.'"

"Surely enough, the very next evening we stood in long line in the area of barracks in our heavy gray overcoats, listening to the shrill tones of the adjutant as he rapidly read the delinquencies for December —th, and among the very first were Boone, S. B., "Disorderly conduct in ranks marching in from parade; Buckner, same at same," and we plebes turned to one another in no little excitement as we broke ranks. Shelby Boone had only six demerit to run on to the end of the year, and that report would come within an ace of "finding him,"

which was the vernacular of the Point for declaring him deficient in discipline, "found on demerit."

The moment after we broke ranks, orders having been published, we plebes started to condole with Shelby and to see how he took it, but we could not get very far. A dense crowd of gray overcoats had gathered about some nucleus just in front of the entrance to the seventh division. The area of barracks was athrill with excitement. With clattering sword, the officer-of-the-day bore down on the group. There was instant scattering. Two or three gray-clad forms darted into the hallway; others followed more leisurely. "What is it? What's happened?" we breathlessly asked,

and a "D" Company man, with white face and compressed lips, answered:

"Hush-sh! Shelby Boone has slapped his cousin's face and called him a cur."

The idea of a cadet private assaulting a cadet sergeant because of the latter's official act was in itself enough to make our blood run cold. The affront was one of the utmost gravity, tantamount to mutiny, and if reported and the offender brought before a court-martial nothing short of dismissal could result. But the idea of a fourth classman, a plebe, daring to strike a sergeant of the second class and apply to him such an epithet was something utterly unheard of.

Boone never in the wide world would have thought of assaulting any other sergeant in the battalion. It was the fact of his kinship, his close connection as cousin and "statesman" with Marshall Boone that had maddened him and led to his hapless deed. It all took place so quickly that very few men realized what had occurred. Breckenridge, with very white face and tremulous lips, was trying to tell a lot of yearlings what he knew about it, and we plebes swarmed upon the outskirts of the circle with eager ears. The only man who was eye-witness to the affair and seemed cool and nonchalant as ever was Duncan, senior cadet corporal of the company. He had

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heard Shelby muttering to himself as the reports were read out and, suspecting mischief, had followed at his heels the moment the battalion broke ranks and prevented further trouble by collaring the plebe and hauling him back the instant after the blow was delivered. The chief had led Marshall away to his own room; the big first sergeant had gruffly marched Shelby to his quarters on the ground floor back room of the seventh division, and ordered him to stay there until cooled off, and now the question was what would Marshall do? He was too short to be a match for Shelby. They were very nearly the same age, to be sure, but all the advantage in strength and size lay

with the plebe, for we had not then the splendid instruction in physical exercise given to-day, and many an old cadet was the bodily inferior of many a plebe. Even if Marshall felt outraged enough to insist on fighting his cousin, it was doubtful whether the chief would let the affair come to a head in that way. As for making an official matter of it and reporting Shelby's action, every one knew he would never do that. The corps was in a quandary. An apology could be tendered for almost any other form of affront, but not for a blow—that calls for a meeting, and a meeting between two Kentuckians, first cousins at that, was something we could hardly conceive possible. Several of

our number thought it the proper thing to go into the seventh division and call upon Shelby and express their sympathy, but they speedily came out again. Hardin, his roommate, opened the door an inch or two and said the chief had given him orders to let no one in or out. Shelby must cool off before any one could see him. He was still tramping up and down his little room like a lion in a cage. They caught a brief glimpse of him and heard him petulantly, wrathfully bid Hardin to shut that door and come in or else go out and stay out. So they tiptoed away, rather chilled toward their friend and yet doing all the valiant talk for him possible, because of his being a classmate.

Neither of the Boones appeared at supper that evening. Both fell out, as was then permitted, immediately after roll call, and so did Buckner and Hardin and Duncan, and the plebes to a man believed that the fight was on, and that, despite disparity in size and reach, the cousins were having it out in some room in the old seventh division. Many an old cadet, too, was of the same opinion. The chief never came to mess hall. He was one of the twelve cadets permitted at that time to board with the Thompson sisters—three venerable maidens whose father had died in service and who had been granted, for something like half a century, the privilege of boarding a dozen

cadets and thereby making a living. Naturally, therefore, the moment the battalion broke ranks after marching from supper, we made a break for the seventh to learn the result. Neither Boone was in his room. Shelby's was dark and deserted. It couldn't be that he had gone to the summer battleground, Fort Clinton; it was too dark. So we scouted around barracks in search of the principals or news of them, but without result. Not until old Bentz was blowing call to quarters did either appear, and then, his handsome face still sullen and scowling, Shelby came lunging through the sallyport, faithful Hardin at his side, and, without a look or word for any of his class-

mates, bolted straight to his room and slammed the door. Then the sentries chased us to our rooms and not another thing did we hear until breakfast next morning, when word came over from the left wing that not only had there been no fight, but there wouldn't be one. Marshall Boone would neither report his kinsman for his mutinous act nor demand satisfaction in accordance with the cadet code of honor. They were both at breakfast, Shelby loud talking, excited and defiant in manner until the big first sergeant arose from his seat and walked over to his table and said one or two words in his ear. Marshall, very quiet, very pale, very sad looking, and well he might

be, for nine-tenths of the corps held that in failing to challenge Shelby for that blow he stood attainted with cowardice. Many of his classmates were furious; some were for ordering out the first sergeant of Company "B," a New Englander, about Shelby Boone's size and weight, and a very pretty boxer withal, and have him call the Kentuckian to account, but they were spared the trouble. The chief had intended to gather his clan about him that evening and read the riot act, as he said, but before he could sound the rally Buckner had put his foot in it, and all doubts as to Marshall Boone's pluck were at an end. At the dinner-table Buckner said, loud enough for every one

within a dozen yards to hear: "I endorse Shelby Boone's every word and act in this matter, sir, and I'd do the same thing myself if I weren't sure the mean-spirited cur would have me court-martialed and dismissed."

Every one turned to see how Marshall Boone, who sat at a neighboring table, would take that insult. He never hesitated a second. His blue eyes blazed with wrath as, in defiance of the rules of the mess hall, he rose from his seat, stepped quickly round the rack on which were hung the overcoats and caps, and, quivering with indignation and excitement, came striding to where Buckner sat, and Buckner rose to meet him. Instantly the cadet lieu-

tenant commandant of table sprang up and interposed: "Not here, Boone. Go back to your own seat," was his order, but not until the sergeant had faced Buckner with "You will be ready to answer for that right after parade, I presume," and Buckner had sneeringly replied: "Any time and any place"—not until then did the young officer succeed in restoring order. The whole battalion stood around the area of barracks between undress parade and supper roll call that night awaiting the result of that—one of the most famous fights in the annals of the war days, and at the end of twenty minutes Duncan came out and called for four yearlings to carry their man to hospital.

Buckner had fought like a Kentuckian and Boone like a fury. Both were battered, but the former was completely used up and lay for nearly a week under the surgeon's care, while Boone, with puffed and blackened visage, went about his duties the following day, grim and silent as ever, listened to the first captain's report against him of "quitting seat in mess hall without permission" with apparent indifference, and only faintly smiled when the chief held out his hand and said: "Marshall, old boy, you served Buckner just right, but this thing's got to stop. The next man that says a word against you I'll attend to."

But the next man never came.

Boone's vindication on that head was complete. No one could understand, however, why he had so tamely submitted to Shelby's cubbish taunt and blow. Sentimentalists in the corps had it that he was in love with Shelby's sister, a very pretty girl who had spent a week at the Point in September, and, if that was not the reason, Breckenridge and Prescott declared that it was because Shelby's mother had been like a mother to Marshall ever since his own mother died six years before. Either was sufficient, and after all the corps was going to believe that Marshall had behaved most magnanimously to his kinsman and had shown all proper grit and spirit in dealing with

Buckner, and even Shelby's own classmates were beginning to urge him to go to his cousin and manfully apologize for the brutal wrong Shelby had done him when there came a cataclysm.

Not a word had been exchanged between the cousins since the evening of the assault. Shelby had sought in vain to have the report removed, but the superintendent was merciful and took off two of older date, so that he had six or seven "demerit" as a margin on which to live till the first of January, and proceeded to celebrate accordingly by doing the most reckless and inexcusable things. There was quite a fad just then in the corps for cooking potato stews over the

gas jets in quarters after "taps," the signal for lights out; another and far more dangerous freak was for "running it" at night down to the village of Highland Falls. Old Benny Havens' place was long since closed and the favorite resort was a tavern on the back road where buckwheat cakes, maple syrup and cider were the attractions. And one Friday evening a party of plebes, most of whom knew that the January examination would terminate their academic existence anyhow, arranged to have a "hash" in Underwood's room, which was across the hall from that occupied by Shelby and Hardin. The chief inspected his eight rooms at the drum beat when the tower clock struck ten, and

with fifteen other inspectors of subdivision, stalked over to the guard-house and reported "all present, sir," to the officer in charge. That official presently hastened back to the officers' mess, where exciting news from the Army of the Potomac had been received early in the evening, and then dark figures began scooting out of the several halls at barracks and concentrating on the seventh division. The chief's room looked out on the area of barracks, but that of Cadet Sergeant ' Boone, which was directly over Underwood's, overlooked the fire-dotted hillside that led up to old Fort Putnam. Boone and his roommate had turned in at taps, as they were entitled to no light after ten

o'clock, but the chief was smoking his pipe and chatting with a brace of chums, when up came a plebe, as in duty bound, to invite the head of the clan and his friends to come down and sample Underwood's hash ; and the magnates went. So it happened that their provender ran short. They had healthy, boyish appetites, and, when the first classmen had gone, somebody suggested that they skip up the back road and down to the Falls and wind up on buckwheats and cider. It was Friday night and inspections after taps rarely occurred on that night. Warren said, too, that there could be no danger anyhow, for Black Jim, the servant of the officers living in the angle of bar-

racks, had told him that Lieutenant Blank, who was in charge of Company "D," had gone to New York that afternoon and wouldn't be back until Saturday evening. So the proposition was carried nem. con., and, despite Hardin's expostulation, nothing would do but that Shelby Boone must go to. One reason that they didn't want him to go was that, while the main body of the class was on pledge, as has been said, the September cadets—those who entered late in the fall, among whom was Shelby—were not enrolled with the class at the time they "went on" to save their comrade, and Shelby had bibulous inclinations. However, just after eleven o'clock, the little squad of

gray coats stole softly out of barracks, across the moonlit area, and away they went up the winding road to the rear of the post, and were speedily lost to view among the trees.

At 11:30, as luck would have it, came a messenger from the hospital. Cadet T., of the first (senior) class, who had been ill with fever a week, was worse, and longed to have his friend, the chief, come and sit with him. The surgeon sent his compliments and begged that the chief would do as asked, and he would make it all right with the commandant in the morning. At 11:30 Cadet Sergeant Boone awoke to find his company commander by his bedside.

“Marshall, old boy, T. is worse, and the doctor has sent for me to come and sit with him to-night. I’ll notify the officer-of-the-day that you will be inspector of ‘subdiv.’ until I return to duty.”

This was nothing new. Whenever it was the chief’s turn to act as officer-of-the-day the duties of inspector of subdivision devolved on the cadet sergeant. Marshall rolled over and was soon fast asleep again, but not for long. The tower clock was striking twelve when he and his roommate were aroused by the hurried entrance of a dimly outlined form and by a voice low, urgent and tremulous with excitement, calling, “Mr. Boone, Mr. Boone.” It was Shelby’s roommate,

Hardin. Breathlessly he told his tidings. Some one must have seen or heard the party that had gone to the Falls, for two officers had come up from the mess and, getting their bull's-eye lanterns, had begun an inspection of the barracks. One of them was now in the first—the other in the fifth division. The intention was doubtless to go through the entire barracks. It meant disaster to every one of the crowd thus found absent from quarters after taps, as the regulations demanded that every cadet so reported must be dismissed unless he could say that he was on cadet limits at the time. Marshall was out of bed and on his feet, wide awake in an instant.

“Run down to the hall door, Plebe,” he said. “Watch when he enters the sixth division and see who it is, if possible, and let me know. There’ll be plenty of time then to get back to your room. I’ll be down in a minute.”

And, stealthy as a cat, Hardin scurried down the iron stairway and took post at the door. Two or three cadets were already there whispering excitedly, and eagerly watching for the reappearance of the inspecting officer. They saw the bull’s-eye lantern, like a will-o’-the-wisp, come dancing along the porch from the first division and disappear in the second. “That’s Polly,” whispered one of the number. “I’d know his walk any-

where. But who's this in "C" Company?"

"None of the regular tacks," was the answer. "He's too long about it. It must be that new fellow who reported last week."

And just then, out from the fifth division came a muffled form. They saw the officer halt, turn his bull's-eye on a paper he held in his hand, and study it a minute. "It is the new fellow, by gad, and he's hived Lee and Kittson sure," whispered an excited plebe. "Now he's into the sixth. Brooks and Walker are gone from there."

"Then he'll come here and hive Boone, Warren and Underwood," muttered Hardin, with a choke in his voice. "It don't much matter with Underwood he'll have to go

next month anyhow, but it will break Shelby's mother's heart."

"Don't worry about Shelby," said a quiet voice at his elbow. "Time to get to your room, Mr. Hardin. Can you put up a good snore?" And turning, they saw by the dim light of the hall lamp Cadet Sergeant Boone. "Skip to your beds now and keep perfectly quiet. I can euchre this game."

An instant later, as the excited plebes hastened to their rooms, Marshall sped noiselessly along the porch, darted into the eighth division and the first room to the right. Here dwelt two fourth classmen, not of the Kentucky colony.

"Wake up here, you two men, lively now," was his order. "Jump

into your reveilles*—quick, and I'll tell you what to do." And accustomed for months to turn out at an instant's notice, and recognizing the authoritative tones of the sergeant file closer they all honored and respected, the youngsters were out of bed and into their socks in a second.

"Lieutenant R —, a new man who knows none of the class by sight is inspecting Company "C." He'll be in the seventh division in less than three minutes. Boone, Warren and Underwood are away at the Falls. Jump, you two, into Warren

* By "reveilles" is meant the loose, easy shoes that the cadets used to wear for that purpose alone, something they could jump into quickly and so get out in time for roll call.

and Underwood's beds, cover up well and be sound asleep when he inspects. Then as soon as he gets up on the third floor sneak for home. I'll get Sep Brown to play Shelby Boone."

Away stole the two, unquestioningly obedient, and a moment later two more shadowy forms scurried along the porch into the seventh division—Boone and Plebe Brown—just as the bull's-eye came flitting down from the fourth floor of the sixth division. At the foot of the iron stairway they separated, Boone going coolly up to his own quarters, the plebe, with beating heart, to Shelby's bed. Two minutes more, with quick, martial tread, the officer entered the hall,

opened the first door to the right, and threw the light of his bull's-eye first on one alcove, then on the other. In each, on his iron bedstead, was a cadet sound asleep. Softly he closed the door, crossed the hall, entered the opposite room and found exactly the same condition of things. Then to the rear rooms he tripped, opened the door to the right. The bull's-eye flashed on each alcove; each had its apparently sleeping tenant, and the black-lettered names on the crossbar at the front of each alcove were Hardin and Boone, S. B. Across the hall Messrs. Warren and Underwood were similarly represented, and then up the iron stairs went the midnight inspector, finding an

occupant in every bed until he came to the chief's. "Where's your roommate?" he asked of the first classman, who awoke with a sleepy yawn.

"At the hospital, sir, by order of the post surgeon, sitting up with Mr. T.——" was the prompt answer, and with a courteous half-apology on his lips, the lieutenant backed out and went on up to the third floor. Then, noiseless as kittens, three plebes slipped out of their nests on the ground floor and sped away to their own rooms in the eight division, and when Lieutenant R——, ten minutes after, joined his comrade officer at the guard-house he said: "What's come over "D" Company? In my time when

there was any deviltry going on they were sure to be in it, but every man's in his bed in the seventh and eighth divisions, while there are four absentees from "C" Company. Let's see, Messrs. Lee, Kittson, Brooks and Walker."

"Odd," was the reply of Lieutenant Polly. "Mullen declares there were at least eight in the party. Very probably they saw him and half of them managed to sprint it home. Well, Mr. Officer-of-the-day, inspect for those young gentlemen every half hour," said he to the silent cadet officer whom they had summoned from his room, and, with the consciousness of duty well performed, the veteran "tack" and "the new feller" walked off to their rooms in the angle.

At 1:30 the renegades came straggling back, Lee, Kittson, Brooks and Walker, to the miserable consciousness that their absence had been discovered, Warren and Underwood to the delirious joy of learning that, thanks to Boone, M., they were safe; and Shelby Boone to be put to bed, struggling, swearing and fighting, so drunk that he did not know or care what had happened.

For hours the three had to stand guard over him, and it was four o'clock before he dropped off to sleep. At six the reveille sounded, and with difficulty they got him up and braced him in ranks. The big first sergeant eyed him sternly as he answered in loud, defiant tones

to his name, and then, back to his quarters he went and, deaf to all remonstrances, tumbled into bed. Now reaction had set in and he was irresistibly drowsy.

By this time the story of Sergeant Boone's stratagem had gone through barracks and he was the idol of the Kentucky colony. Hardin and Underwood were swabbing Shelby's head with wet towels and imploring him to get up and put his alcove in order, but to no purpose. Sharp at 6:30 the drum beat for police inspection, and down came the cadet sergeant. "I couldn't get him up, sir," said Hardin, in answer to the cool inquiry of the young inspector's eyes. Marshall shut the door, finished the

inspection of the other rooms, then marched over to the first sergeant.

“Where’s your skin book, Deacon?” he quietly asked, and entered therein the following report: “Boone, S. B. Bedding down and alcove in disorder at police inspection.” Then as coolly returned to his own room and the study of the day’s lesson in mechanics until breakfast roll call. That was a wretched day for Shelby Boone. He was too drunk to be taken to hospital when sick call sounded immediately after police call at 6:30, and even had they taken him the surgeon would have recognized the cause of his malady at once and he would have been held to account accordingly. He was still drunk

and beginning to be ill when the first drum sounded for breakfast roll call at 6:55. Our hours for morning duties were very different then. Hardin, Warren and Underwood had been doing their best with wet towels, but they had no medicines. The moment the drum sounded, however, down came Marshall Boone. "Get him on his feet and bring him to the washstand," he said, and, willy nilly, struggling and swearing, Shelby was dragged out of bed and his head was held over the basin while dipper after dipper of cold water was soused over him. Then they straightened him up. "Shelby," said his cousin, calmly, "you've got to go out and answer roll call, then you can have

an hour's sleep. Everything depends now on your grit and nerve. Brace up and stand steady, answer in a quiet tone when your name is called, and I'll be with you at the order to fall out. Do you understand?"

Swaying unsteadily, red and misty eyed, flushed and thick-tongued as he was, Shelby recognized the authoritative words. "I'm all right," he said. Hardin at once protested against Marshall's "cutting breakfast" to look after Shelby. "I'm his roommate, sir. I ought to do it." But again the calm decision of the upper classman's voice prevailed. "No. You men have been up all night and need your breakfast. Bring me a roll

in the sleeve of your overcoat. I'll take care of him." And just at that moment the tower clock banged the first stroke of seven, the drums and fifes struck up "Peas Upon a Trencher," and clapping on Shelby's forage cap, with a plebe at each arm, they rushed him out into the area of barracks, and into his place in the quickly forming ranks. Rapidly the Deacon ran over his roll — "Heow," thickly answered Shelby when Boone, S., was called. This time the stern first sergeant looked another way. He knew the whole story and did not wish to see the culprit. "Fall out—close in to the right," were his orders the instant he had finished. "All are present, sir," he reported to the

chief, who stood at the kerb, a cloud on his dark, handsome face, his cap pulled down even more than usual over his flashing eyes. Meantime Boone took Shelby firmly by the arm and led him into the seventh division, the eyes of half of "D" Company following them until the Deacon's stern order "Keep your eyes to the front," brought them to their senses, and so the cousins disappeared from view, and then the battalion marched to breakfast, where at the "D" Company table nothing was talked of but Shelby Boone's utter recklessness and Marshall Boone's brainy stratagem by which the Kentuckians were saved. Among the plebes of "C" there was silence

and gloom. Why hadn't they some guardian angel such as the Kentucky colony rejoiced in? "How was Shelby going to manage about recitations?" was the query on every lip, and it was indeed a serious question.

When the battalion returned from mess the chief and some of the seniors of the clan repaired to Shelby's room. He was sleeping, breathing stertorously, and Marshall was plying the wet towels assiduously. "I have to go to recitation at eight," said he to Hardin, as he hungrily bit into the roll they had brought him. "Get him up in time to go with his section at 9:30." The two plebes were in the lower half of their class in

mathematics and recited between 9:30 and 11, and, that Shelby should be roused before that time was the understanding with which Marshall left them when the bugle sounded at 8 o'clock.

As luck would have it, Lieutenant R—— did not inspect quarters the first hour that Saturday morning, and from a little after seven until after nine o'clock Shelby slept soundly, the only man in the colony untroubled by his plight. Then he awoke, thirsty and savage. Hardin explained to him that in fifteen minutes he must go to recitation, but he doused his face in the cold water and sputtered that he would attend no recitation that day. He was going to hospital to get excused.

An easy-going officer whose cadet sobriquet, oddly enough, was "Whiskey," was officer in charge. "He'll sign anything I ask him to," said Shelby, and at 9:20, sobered, but with red eyes and unsteady step, he marched over to the guardhouse carrying a slip of paper on which Hardin had written for him "Cadet Boone, S., has permission to visit the hospital." This he confidently presented to the officer in charge, who was standing in front of the guardhouse at the moment. A few words were exchanged, as the onlookers could see, and then, armed with the company sick book, away he went. What passed between him and the lieutenant, and then between him and the steward

at the hospital, was not known until later. Shelby was absent from parade of his section for recitation at 9:30, absent from fencing at 12, absent from dinner roll call at 1, and when he returned to barracks about 4 P.M. he was grinning triumphantly and reported to the cadet first sergeant that he was excused from all military duty the rest of the day. Questioned by grave-faced classmates as to what story he had told the officer in charge and the hospital steward, Shelby tossed his head and laughed. "Never you mind," was the answer. "I fixed them all right;" and then rummaging among the piles of underwear in the bottom shelf of his clothes press, he produced a flask

of whiskey and proceeded to drink their health and condole with them because they were on pledge.

But the colony did mind and mind very much. With all its fun and deviltry, "D" Company was "square." Every man knew that had the truth as to the cause of his indisposition been told Shelby Boone would have been in close arrest instead of enjoying a holiday. The clan met that night in diminished numbers. All the plebes were in Shelby's room, sorely troubled, yet knowing not what to do. "If you got one-tenth the demerit you deserve for this spree, Boone, you'd be dismissed cold as a wedge," said the Nestor of the class. "What in heaven's name

possessed you to take such chances when you hadn't more than half a dozen to run on."

"I'll bet you I don't get a single mark," said Shelby, with defiant laugh. "I pulled the wool over old 'Whiskey's' eyes, too."

"But you couldn't fool your kinsman, Boone. He was inspector of subdivision this morning, and he doubtless skinned you for being in bed at inspection. He couldn't help himself."

Shelby started up, ablaze in an instant. "My God! You don't suppose he'd be as dog gone mean as that, do you?" he asked, his angry eyes flitting from one to another in the group.

"How could he help himself,

man? There you lay like a log and we couldn't get you up. You're in the biggest kind of luck if that's the only skin you get for last night's work," said Hardin.

There was a moment's silence. Then, with bitter wrath in every word, Shelby spoke: "If he has skinned me, as you say, it's the meanest, dirtiest revenge for the slap I gave him that a cur could devise, and he'll regret it to his dying day."

The very next night, sure enough, just as predicted, the report was read out. This time Shelby said not a word to his cousin. Refusing company, he strode away toward Kosciusko's Garden all by himself, and that night he was unusually

silent. "He wrote a long letter," said Hardin, "and wrote and tore up several explanations before he got one to suit him."

"He can't give any explanation that will take off that report," said Underwood, with rising suspicion and indignation. "He has no right to attempt to get it removed. You know and I know and he knows it's the very least he deserves."

And yet two days afterward Shelby triumphantly announced that the commandant had scratched off the report, and the Kentucky colony looked blankly at one another and broke up in very grave humor. "Kentucky" was beginning to believe that they would have to discipline Shelby Boone,

and that in the near future. A day or two later, after long and excited discussion, it was agreed among the plebes, after consultation with the cadet adjutant and other magnates, that Shelby must be called upon to state what explanation he had given that could induce the commandant to remove so richly deserved a report, and when the committee waited upon him, Boone S., told them flatly it was none of their business.

“Very good,” said the chairman thereof. “The commandant will doubtless remember it and we mean to lay the matter before him,” whereat Boone, S., turned yellow white, but defiantly told them to go ask, and play the spy, if they

wished. Meantime not to bother him any more about it.

The next evening when Boone, M., came home from recitation, on his table was a letter in a familiar hand. Eagerly he opened it. Five minutes later his roommate was amazed to see him sitting with his head bowed on his arms, sobbing silently in uncontrollable grief. That evening he was led down to hospital, a burning fever having set in. The steward looked gravely disturbed the moment he saw the new patient, sent at once for the doctor and got Marshall Boone to bed in a quiet ward. It was the last we saw of our hero sergeant for nearly a month, but meantime the story got out, somehow, in the Ken-

tucky colony, and there was a thrill of excitement a few days later, just before Christmas, when the cadet adjutant came stalking out in full dress uniform—plumes, sash, sword and all, and walking up to Shelby Boone, now standing moodily by himself, shunned and well-nigh ostracized by his classmates, sternly said: “Mr. Boone, you are hereby placed in close arrest and confined to your quarters. Charge: Conduct unbecoming a cadet and a gentleman. By order of Lieutenant-Colonel Blank.”

It was the chief to whom Boone’s roommate took the letter that had done so much mischief. It was the chief who, the day after the arrival of a gray-haired, soft-voiced woman

and a beautiful girl, called upon and had a painful interview with the former. They were Shelby Boone's mother and sister. The chief took with him the letter which had dropped from Marshall's nerveless hand, and this is what that mother had written to her nephew. What infinite power for inflicting pain God has given to even the gentlest woman!

“MARSHALL: If any one had told me two years ago when you left our roof to enter upon your career at West Point that it would be your hand that would stab me to the heart, your hand that would be relentlessly set against my own dear boy, your hand that would

pen the series of reports that are destined to cut short his career and deal the death-blow to his most cherished hopes and ambitions, I should have laughed the slanderer to scorn.

“Yet it has come to pass, and more too. For weeks I have read between the lines of Shelby’s letters that all was not harmony between you, but in his loyalty to you he would make no complaint. The last pound broke the camel’s back, and he, with breaking heart, has told me all. Is the position of cadet captain of such worth that to win it you must tread your own kith and kin under foot?—that you must climb to your prize over the prostrate form of him who is

the apple of my eye? Ever since your sainted mother's death your welfare and your happiness have been my tenderest care. I loved and reared and guarded you as I would my own, and for my reward you ruin and blast the hopes and prospects of the son you knew to be the object of my fondest hopes, my pride, my life. Marshall Boone, may God forgive you—you have crushed my heart.

“ESTHER SHELBY BOONE.”

The chief before going up to the hotel and sending in his card had a brief conference with the commandant. Buttles of our class was in the south parlor with his mother when, pale and haggard, Mrs.

Boone came down to see her visitor, and he heard and told us the first words that passed between them.

“What does this mean? Why is not my boy here?” she asked.

“Mrs. Boone, I grieve to have to tell you that Shelby is in arrest and cannot leave his room. It is of his——”

“Then we owe it to the malignity and inordinate ambition of our own kindred—to Marshall Boone—that this disgrace has come upon him.”

“Pardon me, Mrs. Boone, but for Marshall Boone your son would have been dismissed before this, and if any one has told you that Marshall has been anything but a devoted, self-sacrificing, loyal kins-

man and Kentuckian, that some one lies, even though it be Shelby himself."

"Are you in your right senses?" she demanded, aghast.

"I am, though I sometimes doubt Shelby's being sane." And then he led her into the north parlor and that was all Buttles heard until twenty minutes later, when she came out and rushed upstairs, crying as if her heart would break, while the chief, with wet eyes, his cap pulled down to his nose, and his head held very high, strode back to barracks.

Not until long after did we get the particulars of that trying interview, and when we heard it we did not wonder that for weeks the chief

looked grave and sad and stern. First, it seems, he asked the sorrowing mother on what authority she had made such damaging charges against one of the most honorable and dutiful "statesmen" he had in his company, and she replied "the best," and produced her son's letter. It is impossible to quote it verbatim, but this was the substance:—That Shelby was over the limit in demerit and would probably be discharged as deficient in discipline, the superintendent having refused to remove any more reports; that he had concealed from her the real cause of his misfortunes, but could no longer keep silence in justice to himself and in justice to her. Marshall Boone's

overweening ambition was to be made captain of that company when the present officers were graduated next June. Cadet officers were generally appointed according to their efficiency and impartiality, from the point of view of the commandant and his tactical officers, and this, said Shelby, meant according to the number of reports against their fellow cadets they handed in. Now Marshall had a splendid chance of making a reputation for absolute impartiality and devotion to duty at Shelby's expense, and notwithstanding the fact that Shelby had a dangerous array of demerit piled up against him, Marshall lost no opportunity—even invented some—and report-

ed him on every possible occasion. So palpable was it to all the other Kentuckians that Marshall was "boning military" at his cousin's expense that he was virtually ostracised by them, and at last, exasperated beyond control by this tyrannical exercise of a sergeant's powers, wrote Shelby, before the whole company he had slapped his cousin's face and called him a cowardly cur, and to the amaze of the whole corps, Marshall would not—probably dare not—fight. All the same he had taken cruel revenge when Shelby had only three demerit to live on, when Marshall knew such a report would find him deficient. Marshall had inspected his room one morning when Shelby, who had

been studying very late the night before, was lying on his bed with a sick headache. The chief never in the world would have reported him, but Marshall seized his opportunity and gave him two "skins," one for being in bed, the other for alcove and room in disorder at police inspection. Even the commandant, said Shelby, was disgusted when the situation was explained to him, and at once removed the report. But Marshall persisted and had reported him for being late at roll calls, for muttering and talking in ranks when he merely whispered a word to his neighbor, and for light in quarters after taps, which was none of Marshall's business, and that was

enough to do the mischief. He, Shelby, had been ruined by his own kith and kin, the man to whom his mother had been loving kindness itself.

“I told her,” said the chief, “that I had a most painful duty to perform, but that she must know the truth at once. That from the day of his admission Shelby had shown absolute indifference to the regulations, rather gloried in breaking them, and seemed to think it made him a hero in the eyes of the corps. That Breckenridge, Duncan, Harrod and others had plead and remonstrated, but, most of all, that Marshall had done his utmost to bring him to a realizing sense of his misdoing. That Marshall had

never reported him until the night an entire set of fours had jumped on the heels of the set in front. The cadet first sergeant had ordered the four reported; that Shelby was one of them and that Marshall could not help himself; that Shelby's slapping his face as a result was the most mutinous thing that had occurred in the battalion in all the days that the chief had been a cadet; that the boy richly deserved dismissal for it, but that Marshall had plead with the cadet officers who were for making an official matter of the offense; plead for the boy's mother's sake and for his, Marshall's sake, who loved her, not to let it be known." ("You should have seen her eyes dilate when I

came to that," said the chief. "Marshall said he would not fight his kinsman because he was that mother's son, but he did fight and soundly thrash a cadet who made sneering comments about the matter."

"And then," said the chief, "I had to tell her of Shelby's 'running it' to the Falls, of the inspection, and how Marshall saved his statesmen, of Shelby's coming back drunk, how that drunk was what led to his lying on the bed next morning, how Marshall was on honor to report such offenses, 'how I would have done it myself had I made the inspection,' how Marshall 'cut breakfast' to nurse and care for the boy who had so brutally wrong-

ed and insulted him. Then how Shelby boasted that he had 'fixed' the officer in charge and steward and pulled the wool over the eyes of the commandant and got that report removed." The hardest part of all to tell her was the action taken by the Kentucky colony. For three or four days they had talked the matter over, they had demanded of Shelby that he tell them what story he had told to induce Lieutenant "Whiskey" to let him go to the hospital, what story he had told there and what explanation he had written to the commandant, and as he refused and was defiant, how a meeting had been held and after much discussion a committee had been appoint-

ed to wait on the commandant and lay the case before him, for every man felt that the honor of the corps had been tarnished and by one of their own State—Kentucky. “Just as we feared, I told her, Shelby had not hesitated to lie. He told the officer in charge that he had been seized during the night with severe cramps in the stomach—with dreadful pain and vomiting, that he had been too ill to go to hospital earlier, and the kind-hearted lieutenant had signed his permit. He told the same story to the steward, who was keener and said, ‘But you’ve been drinking.’ Yes, Shelby promptly admitted—his classmates were frightened at his suffering and not knowing what

else to do had drenched him with liquor. He wrote his explanation to the commandant for being in bed, etc., something to the same effect and pointed out that he had subsequently been excused from all duty that day by the authority of the post surgeon. A cadet's word is generally as good as a sworn statement, and of course the report was removed."

"Then very gravely the committee had to tell the commandant that their statesman had lied and that excessive indulgence in liquor which he himself procured and took in defiance of their advice and remonstrance, was the sole cause of his violation of the regulations. They made no mention of his 'run-

ning it' to the Falls. What they said was enough. Shelby was sent to his quarters in arrest by the adjutant and to Coventry by his classmates and the corps."

As to the other reports alleged by him to have been given by Marshall, the chief speedily disposed of the story. It was the big first sergeant who reported him for muttering and talking in ranks. It was the second sergeant who reported him late at roll call. It was Lieutenant R—— who, from the west front of barracks, saw the light in Shelby's room, and meeting Marshall next morning when he was serving as sergeant of the guard, ordered him to ascertain who was orderly of that room, and re-

port him for light in quarters after taps. Marshall had no volition in the matter. Shelby, however, had made no mention of other reports he had received. More lates, more recklessness, more deliberate violation of law and orders. His whole endeavor had been to embitter his mother against his honored and dutiful kinsman, whose standing, success and prospects had aroused Shelby's keen envy and jealousy, sentiments that speedily swelled into hate.

There was a scene at the old hospital the evening of the chief's visit to Mrs. Boone that was witnessed by only one or two, but those who saw can never forget it. Still burning with fever, delirious

and tossing restlessly, Marshall Boone was lying in his narrow bed, the chief and his big first sergeant bending anxiously over him, fanning the hot forehead and occasionally moistening the lips of the patient. The door opened and the doctor appeared, ushering in a tall, gray-haired, noble looking woman whose soft eyes began to stream with tears the moment she entered. At sight of her the two cadet officers respectfully arose, and the chief drew a chair for her up to the bedside, but she turned away, removed her bonnet, cloak and gloves, then knelt beside the couch, her eyes swimming, her lips quivering in an agony of speechless grief. She gazed into Marshall's face one mo-

ment, then taking his hand in both of hers, bowed her proud head until her lips rested upon it, and there, clinging to it, kissing it, bathing it in her tears she knelt, sobbing, praying, suffering, God alone knows how much, suffering as only mothers can through the shame and sorrow brought to them by a beloved yet unworthy son, suffering as only an honorable and pure-hearted woman can who learns that she has utterly wronged a loyal, loving and devoted friend. Full half an hour she knelt there, sometimes looking pleadingly into his unconscious eyes, murmuring his name and striving piteously to win one sign or word of recognition, but all to no purpose. Marshall's

fever was at its climax. The doctor, though hopeful that with his splendid constitution the patient would pull through—could not say what the result might be. At last, bending over the prostrate head again, and fondly stroking back the wet and matted hair, she pressed her lips long upon the burning forehead. They could see that she was praying with her whole heart and soul in her words, and then the doctor led her into the ante-room, and then an officer, a Kentuckian too, silently offered his arm and conducted her to the barracks, ushered her into Shelby's room where he was sitting moodily by the window. Hardin took his cap and overcoat and tiptoed out,

and the mother and son were left together. What passed in that interview, what further suffering was in store for that sorrowing, broken-spirited woman, God and the angels only know. She never spoke of it. He had no one at the Point to speak to.

Four days followed in which, each day, she spent as much time by Marshall's bedside as the surgeon would allow. Then the fever broke and he slept—slept—slept, hour after hour, and then a telegram from one of the senators of her beloved State summoned her at once to Washington. Telegrams and letters had been passing to and fro. For the sake of old Kentucky, for the honor of the old name all the

influence of that great commonwealth was being brought to bear on the Iron Secretary to induce him to countermand the order for Shelby's trial by court-martial because of the public disgrace that must follow, and to allow him to resign. It was the mother's plea that finally prevailed on the great heart of the greatest man that ever occupied the presidential chair since the days of Washington. The Secretary, who would not yield to any pleadings of senators, statesmen, soldiers, or even that mother, bowed to the mandate of the all-merciful Lincoln. Just at the close of that sad and trying year, the order was signed accepting the resignation of Cadet Shelby Buckner Boone and

directing his discharge from the military service of the United States. A day later and Mrs. Boone reappeared at the post and the doctor met her at the ferry. "Very weak but convalescent," he said. "Come with me at once," and he assisted her into the waiting carriage.

Ten minutes more and she had thrown off her wraps in the ante-room and was again kneeling by the bedside of her sister's son. All the flush and heat were gone. He lay there white, almost, as his pillow, wan and feeble, "humble as a little child," but at her entry a faint light gleamed in his weary eyes, he tried to hold out his arms to her, his lips murmured the old fond pet

name "Aunt Essie," and the big first sergeant turned away to the window with a lump in his throat, raging at the sudden blindness that overcame him, as, with one great sob, one cry of "Marshall, my blessed boy, can you forgive?" she threw herself on her knees beside him and twining her arms about his neck, gave way to an irrepressible flood of tears. The reconciliation was complete.

The January examinations were over when Boone, M., reappeared in our midst, walking with a cane, very feeble, very white, but gravely, serenely happy. We used to sit on heavy iron stools in the mess hall in those days, but they had other uses. When any particularly

valued graduate came back from the wars on brief leave and dropped in to look at the corps, we would half rise and taking these tremendous implements in both hands pound the floor with them, raising thunders of applause. This day the four companies had all obeyed the order "Take Seats" before Boone, aided by the sergeant and the corporal of the guard, appeared clambering slowly up the steps. He entered the arched doorway. The heavy portals swung to behind him. Some sudden inspiration seized the men at the nearer tables and they seized the stools and began. In another moment the thunder rolled from one end of the resounding mess hall to the other.

The first captain sprang up as though to order silence, but, catching sight of Boone, the words stuck in his throat. He came forward, caught Boone by the hand and led him, blushing, to his seat at the "D" Company table, while we plebes, and everybody else for that matter, hammered away with the stools for all we were worth. Then as the thunder gradually died away somebody shouted "Speech," and that, too, was taken up; but nothing could tempt Boone to open his lips. The stern, ringing tones of the first captain commanding attention suddenly silenced the unusual uproar. "This demonstration has been permitted because I hadn't the heart to stop it," said he, "but now order will be resumed."

One scene more. Concentrating on the extended lines of Rosecrans along Chickamauga Creek, Bragg's gray-clad hosts from the southward, Longstreet's veteran fighters from Virginia have dashed upon brigade after brigade and pierced the fateful gap where, earlier in the morning, Wood's division held the foe at bay. The corps of Crittenden and McCook, crumbling away, are in flight toward Rossville Gap in the range at the rear of the line. Over to the north Thomas still fights indomitably and here and there some isolated brigade or regiment is making desperate stand. Among these, battling savagely over its prostrate dead and dying, a Kentucky battal-

ion still clings to its ground, rallying about a tall, beardless, daring lieutenant who, with the riddled colors in his left hand, his flashing sword in the right, with ringing voice and magnificent gesture calls to his comrades to stand their ground. Gallantly, manfully they obey. A bullet has torn its way along his cheek, deluging his shoulder strap and the silken folds with his blood, but he never heeds it. High aloft he waves the flag. "Stand your ground, boys. Stick to it! For the honor of old Kentucky, never yield an inch. Stand——"

There is sudden break in the thrilling words—a shiver, a stagger, and then color and color bearer

plunge headlong to earth. Quickly the flag is seized and again waved on high, but no hand can raise the form of him who so bravely upheld it but a moment ago. Staggered by the fierce fire of the Kentuckians the Confederates have for the moment recoiled. A captain hastily kneels, turns the young officer's face upward and takes one look into the fixed and sightless eyes. "Shot through the heart!" he says. "Poor Shelby, at least he fought and died like a man."

THE END.





